

The Fantastical World of *Playboy*

By

Brooklyn Rae Barlow

A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfillment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

History

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2021

©Brooklyn Rae Barlow 202

Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

Abstract

While *Playboy* was published in the early Fifties its success is arguably reflected through the longevity and survival of the name and logo; as the *Playboy* Bunny logo and the symbol of Hugh Hefner (specifically dressed in a red robe, silk pajamas, hat and pipe) resonates and is recognized in American society today. Arguably, the success of *Playboy* represents the successful impact it had on American culture, norms and ways of understanding sex and sexuality. This success is rooted in Hugh Hefner's ability to create and sell a fantastical world to his readers.

Playboy was first published in the 1950s by Hugh Hefner, he dreamed of publishing a magazine that endorsed and liberated American sexuality. His publication both enhanced and coincided with the changing social norms of the 1960's; which is commonly referred to as the sexual revolution. While Hefner carefully used the changing ideologies and trends in America during the Sixties to reinvent the single American man and woman, he also simultaneously began to establish what I argue to be the fantastical world of *Playboy*. On the outside, the world of *Playboy* appeared to both indulge men's desires and fantasies about women while also empowering women to embrace their sexuality and liberate them from the sexual repression of the Fifties.

While the world of *Playboy* appeared flawlessly fanciful there are ways to understand the manipulative and abusive tactics used by Hefner and his enterprise to maintain the illusion of *Playboy*. This thesis begins to explore and expose the nuances of *Playboy* magazine by analyzing the publication of *Playboy* magazine between 1960 and 1970 that serve to maintain male dominance and the suppression of women. I also explore other published documentation from women who worked for *Playboy* during the Sixties. In addition, I also interview Victoria Valentino who was both a *Playboy* Playmate and Bunny in the Sixties. My methodology of research works together in an attempt to provide insight into the world of *Playboy* that has been otherwise ignored and/or censored in a means of maintaining its fantastical illusion.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge my supervisor Doctor Andrew Hunt for his guidance and support throughout this year. His knowledge and insight have played an essential role in my growth and development as an academic.

I would also like to acknowledge the panel members for the MA thesis defense; Doctor John Sbardellati and Doctor Jane Nicholas. Both allowed me to think critically about my thesis and have helped inspire me to continue my line of research in the future.

In addition, I would like to thank Victoria Valentino who graciously and willingly shared her story and her experience working for *Playboy* Magazine and Enterprise. Her contribution and interview played an essential role in my thesis and helped me obtain a deeper understanding of the nuances of working for *Playboy*.

Finally, I would also like to acknowledge my family; specifically my husband, who supported and encouraged me throughout my graduate degree. Their unwavering encouragement means everything to me.

Table of Contents

Author's Declaration	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
List of Figures	vi
Chapter 1: An Introduction	1
Chapter 2: The Sexual Revolution in America	7
Chapter 3: The Construction of the <i>Playboy</i> Bachelor	39
Chapter 4: The New Single American Woman Through Hefner's Vision of Empowering Women	65
Chapter 5: Solidifying the Image Through the Use of Cartoons	79
Chapter 6: The Fantasy Collapse – An Analysis of Written and Oral Histories from Bunnies and Playmates	92
Chapter 7: A Conclusion	105
Bibliography	108

List of Figures

- Figure 1: Playboy, *"50 Years: A Playboy Celebration"*, 2004, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, 2004, 130.
- Figure 2: *Decadence: The People's Choice*, 1979.
- Figure 3: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, June 1960., 1.
- Figure 4: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, September 1965., 1.
- Figure 5: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, January 1968., 1.
- Figure 6: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, July 1969., 1.
- Figure 7: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, August 1970., 1.
- Figure 8: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, August 1978., 1.
- Figure 9: Sports Illustrated . "The Best 1960's Swimsuits." <http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2008/07/09the-best-1960s-swimsuits#>.
- Figure 10: Cover . *Playboy*, June 1962., 1
- figure 11: Sports Illustrated . "The Best 1960's Swimsuits." <http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2008/07/09the-best-1960s-swimsuits#>.
- Figure 12: Sports Illustrated . "The Best 1960's Swimsuits." <http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2008/07/09the-best-1960s-swimsuits#>.
- Figure 13: Sports Illustrated . "The Best 1960's Swimsuits." <http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2008/07/09the-best-1960s-swimsuits#>.
- Figure 14: "Cigars, cigarettes, birth control pills..." advertisement, 1963, printed in *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives, 1950-1970*, Elizabeth Watkins, un-paginated.
- Figure 15: ABC News, *Photos: Brady Bunch Cast, Then and Now*, ABC News Entertainment.
- Figure 16: Playboy, *"And to think, Santa, that I didn't believe in you"*, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, 1960, 55.
- Figure 17: Playboy, *The Playboy Club Tie*, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1960, 38.
- Figure 18: Playboy, *The Playboy Ski Sweater*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1962, 202. & Playboy, *Playmate Perfume*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1962, 202.
- Figure 19: Playboy, *Playboy Pajama Bag*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, January 1962, 142. & Playboy, *The Playmate Pin*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, January 1962, 142.
- Figure 20: Playboy, *Reading, Relaxing or Reciprocating*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, August 1964, 119.
- Figure 21: Playboy, *You know, I heard you were neat, but I really had no idea*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, June 1962, 55.
- Figure 22: Playboy, *Trimwear by McGregor*, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, June 1960, 84-85.
- Figure 23: Playboy, *Merry Christmas Gifts*, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1960, 84-85.
- Figure 24: Playboy, *Merry Christmas: Playboy Presents Handsome Holiday Swag from Santa's Sack*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1964, 194-203.

Figure 25: Playboy, *7-Up*, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1962, 9.

Figure 26: Playboy, *What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1964, 111.

Figure 27: Playboy, *What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, November 1964, 79.

Figure 28: Playboy, *What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1967, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, September 1967, 101.

Figure 29: Playboy, *Miss September: Playboy's Playmate of the Month*, 1963, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, September 1963, 118.

Figure 30: Playboy, *Miss October: Playboy's Playmate of the Month*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, October 1964, 109.

Figure 31: Playboy, *Miss July: Playboy's Playmate of the Month*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, July 1964, 73.

Figure 32: Playboy, *Miss July: Playboy's Playmate of the Month*, 1966, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, July 1966, 84-85.

Figure 33: Playboy Enterprises Inc, *I guess the young folks decided to go out afterall*, 2004, Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons, 4.

Figure 34: Playboy Enterprises Inc, *Don't worry, Mrs. Higgins – I'll have your faughter in bed before midnight*, 2004, Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons, 16.

Figure 35: Playboy Enterprises Inc, *I'm tired of sneaking around like this. Just what does your husband have against me anyway?!*, 2004, Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons, 16.

Figure 36: Playboy, *"And I supposed this is where he rests between inspirations"*, 1970, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, May 1970, 147.

Figure 37: Playboy, *"That was certainly was a surprise ending!"*, 1963, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, May 1963, 102.

Figure 38: Playboy, 1963, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, April 1963, 155.

Figure 39: Playboy, *"Chuck, baby, this ad is doing to sell us one helluva lot of dog food"*, 1967, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, July 1967, 63.

Figure 40: Playboy, *"Oh, that's all right, I wasn't doing anything important"*, 1970, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, November 1970,

Chapter 1: An Introduction

In Hugh Hefner's biography historian Steven Watts writes: "Like Walt Disney in the movies, Muhammad Ali in sports, or Elvis Presley in popular music, [Hugh] Hefner has come to signify a personal style, a fantasy. Like these larger-than-life figures, he has become an icon of modern American."¹ Watt's description synonymously aligns with the legacy that Hugh Hefner left behind as his logo, lifestyle, magazine, motion pictures, Playmates and Bunnies continue to resonate with American's. Hugh Hefner was, as Watts suggests, the all-American Man in 1960 America. He successfully created a multimillion-dollar legacy by surrounding himself with beautiful women and people who admired and idolized him. Hugh Hefner embodied the American dream [which is the idealistic idea of social and economic advancement from hard work]² for single men, as he was an example of how hard work and determination led to fame and wealth. Hugh Hefner's career and creation of *Playboy* magazine in the late 1950s and early 1960s has evolved and persevered well into twenty first century America, emphasizing how successful the company is. Before his passing in 2017 Hugh Hefner was typically surrounded by beautiful young women dressed as bunnies who (appeared) to adore him regardless of his age. His success stemmed from his ability to sell his reality and world to American society through his magazine *Playboy*, his clubs and his brand. However, while men raced to partake in Hefner's world, it is historically significant to remember the women who made it happen.

¹ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 1.

² Jim Cullen, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that Shaped a Nation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003, 8.

Women who become the iconic symbols of the *Playboy* magazine enterprise are referred to as Playmates or Bunnies. Playmates were women featured in *Playboy* magazine³, while *Playboy* Bunnies were often seen in the iconic bunny costume working within the *Playboy* clubs and mansions as servers and entertainers.⁴ Often, it was common for Playmates to also work as Bunnies and make special appearances in social environments like the clubs and parties.⁵

Playmates and Bunnies are emblems of the old and new sexual revolution(s) from being featured in Hefner's magazines and enterprise; but many of these women made personal sacrifices and psychologically struggled to accept their new roles. Their sacrifices and hardships are rarely broadcasted to American society because it deteriorates the fantastic illusion of *Playboy* and the fantasy of the sexual revolution in the Sixties. Through this paper it becomes increasingly more obvious that the glitter, fame, bunny ears and the rapidly evolving sexual revolution was not the life most women in the 1960s expected it to be. As often, it was a manipulative illusion to make American women believe that the changes were for the betterment of women's sexual sociopolitical lives.

The Sixties was a time of turbulent change in America. After the initial scare of the Cold War and Vietnam War, a stronger drive for sexual freedoms sprung forward from the growing younger generations. This drive and social protest came from both men and women of all classes in American society. As historian Jeffrey Escoffier argues: "the revolution that emerged in the sixties was as much a change in attitudes about sex as it was a significant shift in sexual conduct. Changes in the way that people thought about sexuality and gender roles stimulated new modes

³ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 46.

⁴ Ibid, 161.

⁵ Ibid.

of behaviour that were not always measured by increased sexual activity. For example, women entered marriage with greater experience and confidence than women in the past.”⁶ What is significant about Escoffier’s definition of the sexual revolution was that it was not an abandonment of American lifestyles, but rather a shift in the way people thought about and partook in sex and sexual activities before they desired marriage and children. Which in turn, allowed sex to become mainstreamed into American society because it was no longer directly correlated with marriage and procreation. This shift allowed American society to become more accustomed to being confronted with sex in consumerist culture. Sex was becoming a social freedom, a consumerist ploy and part of one’s private life and no longer of controlled through traditional private and public morals and norms.

One of the most arguable advancements in the consumption of sex was the publication and selling of pornographic materials to the public. Before October 1957 publications, containing illicit or pornographic material was illegal in American society. It wasn’t until the United States Supreme Court’s historic Roth decision (Roth v United States, 1957) that Justice William Brennan deemed that for the material at question to be deemed “illegal” it must be in its whole obscene and not have any other social importance.⁷ After the Roth decision, it become increasingly more difficult to persecute and define obscene material. Hence, when *Playboy* was first published in December 1953 (figure 1) as not only a pornographic magazine but as a men’s entertainment magazine it became one of the more influential publications in the United States and helped

⁶ Jeffrey Escoffier, ed. *Sexual Revolution*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003, xiii.

⁷ Robert C. Cottrel, *Sex, Drugs, and Rock'n' Roll: The Rise of America's 1960 Counterculture*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 35.

drive the sexual revolution forward by helping change people's attitudes about sex.⁸ And because it wasn't in its entirety obscene it was allowed to publish.

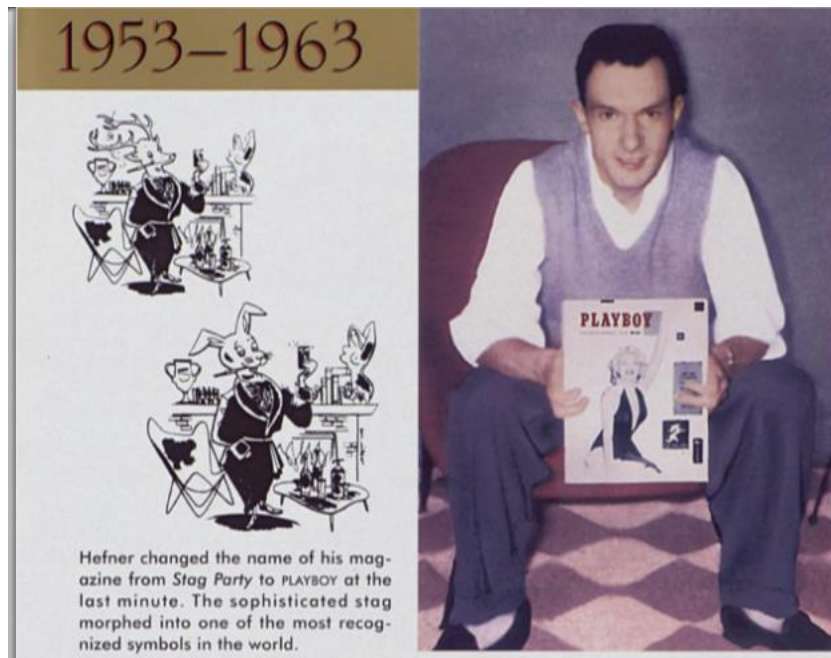


Figure 1: Playboy, "50 Years: A Playboy Celebration", 2004, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, 2004, 130.

Thus, *Playboy* magazine and the iconic *Playboy* Bunnies were introduced to the world in the mid-Fifties and Sixties. Its revolutionary breakthrough of easily accessible coloured pornography allowed Hefner to rapidly expand his enterprise by opening and hosting lustful parties, and nightclubs. His enterprise only amped the sexual revolution that was attempting to free women from strict social sexual boundaries, or so Hefner argued it did.⁹

Arguably, what made *Playboy* unique was its ability to re-invent and commodify the fantasy of a new American single woman and man. The reinvention of the single woman in *Playboy* was sexually admirable, a "freak in the sheets" and yet, still wanted to fulfill her American duties of marriage and children; after, she explored different sexual experiences.

⁸ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 4.

⁹ Ibid.

Afterall, it can be argued that the woman/Playmates who were featured in *Playboy* during the Sixties were approachable, realistic to American society and were “marriage material”. The new single man featured in *Playboy* was independently successful and a bachelor who enjoyed spending his hard-earned money on himself before he considered marriage. While the new single man seemed to reap all the benefits, the women featured in *Playboy* magazine were admired and labelled emblems of the sexual revolution because they became liberated confident sexual figures in the Sixties. However, the fantasy curated in *Playboy* was an illusion, as many *Playboy* Bunnies and Playmates inherently had to reject traditional American ideologies that told women that their roles in society were to be married and start a family at a young age. Going against traditional American ideologies surrounding women’s roles was something that Playmates and Bunnies had to embrace in order to fit into the image of the *Playboy* Bunny and/or Playmate. Many *Playboy* Bunnies and Playmates had a difficult time accepting new roles, as *Playboy* manipulated their image and life story in a means of maintaining a fluid and consistent image and narrative.

As I argue that *Playboy* uniquely crafted the fantastical world of *Playboy* it is essential that the illustrations and graphics are analyzed to provide a deeper understanding of the consistent thoroughly ingrained message Hugh Hefner made. As a heavily illustrated magazine since its first issue, *Playboy* relied on a variety of different type of graphics to help convey issues of style and substance to its readers. In its methodology, my thesis relies partially on analysis of these images in order to deepen our historical understanding of the magazines content. Simply quoting written commentaries, such as memoirs, interviews, and articles and other text-based sources is not sufficient when studying the impact of *Playboy* magazine. It was as much image

driven as text-drive, which necessitates a deep exploration of the magazines more visual elements.

In order to analyze the illustrations, graphics, photographs and articles from *Playboy* I began by reading each *Playboy* publication published in 1960. Once I had noted ongoing themes throughout the issues published in 1960, I read through every other publication between 1961 and 1970 as I felt this provided a good sample of the content from *Playboy* magazine. After reading through the magazines, I selected the articles, advertisements, illustrations, photos and centerfolds that best suited and represented the themes and nuances argued in this thesis.

Other primary sources used throughout this paper have been pulled from other influential and popular newspapers and magazines. In particular, I focus on *Cosmopolitan* Magazine because it has a rich transformative history in American popular culture as the content of *Cosmopolitan* went through a major transformation when editor Helen Gurley Brown took over the magazine in the Sixties. In addition, articles have been used from *New York Times* newspaper; as, much like *Cosmopolitan* magazine, it has a rich history in America and is traditionally known as a reliable form of news for the general American population.

While this thesis refers to the impact *Playboy* had on American men and women it is important to note that for the purpose of this research and the time restraints in writing this thesis I am referring to white middle class men and women. Often, racialized groups of people were excluded from the fantastical world of *Playboy*. In the future, it will be paradigm to explore various perspectives in a means of providing a more well-rounded and thorough understanding of the nuances of *Playboy* and the impact it had on American society in the Sixties.

Chapter 2: The Sexual Revolution in America

Historians have argued that the sexual revolution started in America around the Fifties and continued into the late Seventies.¹⁰ Hence, the Sixties became labelled as the decade that American society began to embrace a new kind sexual freedom by changing their understanding of what sex meant to them.¹¹ For instance, the dominant norms of American society in the 1950's reinforced traditional sexual morals.¹² Core beliefs emphasized that: sex was reserved for marriage and procreation, women were supposed to remain virgins until their wedding night, advertising and selling contraceptives freely to customers should remain illegal and having children was not only encouraged, but it symbolized American tradition, safety and power.¹³ These traditional ideologies began to be questioned by Americans in the late Fifties and Sixties, despite pressures to conform by influential societal institutions such as churches.¹⁴ Hence, the sexual revolution changed ways of understanding the socio norms of sex and reproductive autonomy for both men and women. Arguably it changed societal norms more drastically for women than it did for men, since women's sexuality was often the one being repressed or controlled by private relationships and public institutions alike. Feminist author and activist

¹⁰ Jeffrey Escoffier, "Introduction." In *Sexual Revolution*, edited by Jeffrey Escoffier, United States: Thunder Mouth's Press, 2003, xii., Nancy L. Cohen, *Delirium: The Politics of Sex in America*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2012, 9-13.

¹¹ Elizabeth Fox Genovese, Commentary . *Commentary* 100, no. 5 (November 1995): 53-54, 53.

¹² Backhouse, Constance, and David H. Flaherty, eds. *Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States*. Canada: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992, 62., Robert C. Cottrell, *Sex, Drugs , and Rock 'n' Roll: The Rise of America's 1960's Counterculture*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 105.

¹³ Catherine Gourley, *Gadgets and Women Warriors: Perceptions of Women in the 1950s and 1960s*. Vol. 4. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2008, 13-14., Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 9 – 10., Robert C. Cottrell, *Sex, Drugs , and Rock 'n' Roll: The Rise of America's 1960's Counterculture*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 106 & 107-108.

¹⁴ Dany Lacombe, *Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism*. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 21., Christopher Turner, *Adventures in the Orgasmatron: How the Sexual Revolution Came to America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011, 355., Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 41-42.

Gloria Steinem, who rose to national prominence in the early 1970s, states: “Women will be the main fighters in this sexual revolution. It is our freedom, our safety, our lives, and our pleasure that are mostly at stake”.¹⁵ Steinem reiterates that the governing institutions regulating women’s bodies and sexuality were male-dominated well into the late 1960s, thus in part determining the autonomy women had over their own bodies and sexual freedoms. Arguably by looking at three influential American works that were published in the Fifties and late Sixties: *The Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male & The Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female*, *The Feminine Mystique* and *Sex and the Single Girl*, will provide further insight into the changing ideologies and norms and provide insight into what leading feminists and female figures thought about the sexual revolution; as these texts influenced the American population.

The Sexual Behaviour in the Human Male published in 1948 and *The Sexual Behaviour in the Human Female* published in 1953 – co-written by prominent sexologist scholars Alfred Kinsey, Wardell Pomeroy, Clyde Martin, and Paul Gebhard - are commonly grouped together and are known as *The Kinsey Reports*. *The Kinsey Reports* reported, published and analysed sexual statistics surrounding intercourse and sexual experiences outside the confines of marriage that strayed from heteronormative relations. These statistics glaringly demonstrated that more American’s were abandoning traditional American morals and sexual standards.¹⁶ *The Kinsey Reports* were quite revolutionary in the late Fifties as sexuality was still repressed in America in

¹⁵ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador, 2018, 233.

¹⁶ Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 1., Duke, Selwyn. "Kinsey: Deviancy Is the New Normal." *The New American: History Past and Perspective* 25, no. 9 (April 27, 2009), 1.

means of maintaining traditional family ideals¹⁷ and *The Kinsey Reports* expose the already changing mindsets of American citizens before the 1960s, despite efforts the American puritans and enforcers of traditional morals/norms surrounding sexuality made to continue to repress sex in favour of traditional family norms and aspirations.¹⁸ Hence, regardless of the attempts made to contain and control the changing sexual morals, *The Kinsey Reports* blatantly reported and proved that the average American were not only changing their attitudes about sex, but their actions and behaviours were changing too. The influence *The Kinsey Reports* had on the American population can be assumed because these books sold out across America as more Americans were eager to read his findings.¹⁹ While the studies examined male and female sexual trends, arguably the report on female sexuality was more socially shocking to comprehend. As Kinsey focused his study on white middle class married American women who were supposed to be the pinnacle of upholding American morals and traditions.²⁰ More significantly, the report shed light on the sexual double standards held for men and women in America. It exposed that women's female sexuality could no longer be ignored; nor, should it be silenced as women, according to the report, could enjoy sex just as much as men.²¹ In addition, it encouraged women to become more informed about their ability to enjoy sex and demand it

¹⁷ Miriam G. Reumann *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 2., Frederic D. Schwarz, "The Kinsey Report." *American Heritage* 48, no. 8 (December 1997): 98, 98.

¹⁸ Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 25-26.

¹⁹ Frederic D. Schwarz, "The Kinsey Report." *American Heritage* 48, no. 8 (December 1997): 98, 98., Robert C. Cottrell, *Sex, Drugs, and Rock'n'Roll: The Rise of America's 1960's Counterculture*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015, 106., Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 94.

²⁰ Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 86-88.

²¹ *Ibid*, 87-88 & 94.

from their sexual partners. Some guardians of morality, sociologists and social commentators believed that the reports and sexual awakening of American women threatened marriage and tradition as this information was now being used by the media. The media began to portray women as sexualized figures and feature sex in popular culture.²² *The Kinsey Reports* also influenced Hugh Hefner. Hugh Hefner wrote of *The Kinsey Reports* in one of his earlier student papers: “‘Sex Behaviour and the U.S. Law’ was the basis for what would become the *Playboy* philosophy. ‘If Kinsey had done the research,’ Hefner reflected years later, ‘I was the pamphleteer, spreading the news of sexual liberation through a monthly magazine.’”²³ *The Kinsey Reports* successfully spread their research to his American audience, so much so that the creator of *Playboy* felt that he was embracing, exemplifying and informing his audience of *The Kinsey Reports* by leading by example thus showing that the information gained was utilized to help transform popular culture in America. *The Kinsey Reports* also influenced leading feminists.

Pioneering women’s rights advocate Betty Friedan published *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963 which quickly became one of the best-selling novels in America because of its unique ability to discuss the looming crisis of the female identity in American society.²⁴ Friedan not only identified the vast void that white middle class women felt because of their lack of achievement outside the confines of being a housewife and mother²⁵ but she highlighted why women felt sexually inferior to men. Friedan specifically focused on Freudian theory in her work because

²² Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 106-107.

²³ Christopher Turner, *Adventures in the Orgasmatron: How the Sexual Revolution Came to America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011, 356.

²⁴ Kathryn A. Cady, "Labor and Women's Liberation: Popular Readings of The Feminine Mystique." *Women's Studies in Communication* 32, no. 3 (2009): 348-79, 148-149.

²⁵ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2013, 1-2.

Freudian theory influenced American society. Freudian's ideologies endorsed female sexual repression and the fulfillment of traditional gender roles.²⁶ Yet, she specifically highlights how Freudian's theory only focuses on woman's sexual relationship with man and not with herself.²⁷ This is significant as it suggests that female sexual pleasure and life fulfillment of having children was solely dependent on a man. However, Freudian explores how this level of sexual repression expanded into female expectations of behaviours as she explores how social institutions like education taught women to be reserved, to repress their sexuality, and ignore any sexual impulses.²⁸ Hence, it gives reason as to why most women were eager to get married and have children, as it was the only socially acceptable way women knew how to express themselves sexually.²⁹ Ironically, according to Friedan, most women learned after they were married that their husbands were unable to make them feel sexually satisfied, leaving them feeling lost.³⁰

The Kinsey Reports influenced Friedan's perceptions about the way women were behaving within their sexual confines. While Kinsey reported an increase in sexual interactions among young American women, the report also revealed that more educated women had an easier time reaching sexual climax than those who were uneducated.³¹ Suggesting that if women postponed roles as wives and mothers to pursue higher levels of education and a career before marriage they would have more sexual confidence and obtain sexual fulfillment. This idea mirrored Friedan's thoughts about the importance of education for women, as she felt that

²⁶ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2013, 112.

²⁷ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2013, 129-130 & 222.

²⁸ Ibid, 18-19, 187, 309 & 318.

²⁹ Ibid, 18-19, 187, 309 & 318.

³⁰ Ibid, 18-19, 187, 309 & 318.

³¹ Ibid, 19, 221- 222 & 227.

education and the pursuit of a career would provide women with a level of achievement and fulfillment – something that she believed American women were missing from their lives.

While, Friedan agreed with *The Kinsey Reports*, she highlighted that woman - regardless of their “sexual hunger” - felt joyless because the dominant social norms removed the intimacy out of sex and turned it into something that merely focused on the physical act and fantasy of sex.³² While Friedan agreed with the ideas that educated and career driven women felt more sexually fulfilled and satisfied within their marriage³³ it is historically significant that both Friedan and Kinsey (and his fellow scholars) provided evidence to show that American mindsets about sex were changing, and that women in particular were both ready and willing to express themselves sexually – whether that was inside or outside the confines of marriage.

Published in 1962 *Sex and the Single Girl* instantly sold millions of copies in the early 1960s. The author, Helen Gurley Brown who was the editor and chief of *Cosmopolitan* magazine believed that women needed to reject the outdated ideologies of gearing their early life towards marriage and family. While Brown did not dismiss marriage entirely, she nonetheless encouraged women to spend time on their own personal development first: “I think marriage is insurance for the *worst* years of your life. During your best years you don’t need a husband. You do need a man of course every step of the way, and they are often cheaper emotionally and a lot more fun by the dozen.”³⁴ Brown embraced the idea that women should be single and embrace their sexuality and youthful beauty. Brown writes:

When a man thinks of a single woman, he pictures her alone in her apartment, smooth legs sheathed in pink silk capri pants, lying tantalizingly among dozens of satin cushions,

³² Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2013, 310-311.

³³ Ibid, 398-399.

³⁴ Helen G. Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl*. 50th ed., New York: Barricade Books Inc., 1962, 4.

trying to read but not very successfully. . . She has the extra twenty minutes to exercise everyday, an hour to make up her face for their date. . . physically more inviting . . . her choice of partners is endless and they see her. They never come to her bed duty-bound. Her married friends refer to her pursuers as wolves, but actually many of them turn out to be lambs – to be shorn and worn by her.³⁵

Brown encouraged a more independent life for women that did not include marriage and children at a young age. Instead, she insisted on building confidence, beauty and sexual exploration before settling down. Brown's book interestingly reads like an instruction manual or guide to help women navigate their single life; for example two chapters of her book are dedicated to categorizing different types of men and how/where to meet these men. This is significant as it suggests that the average white American woman would not know how to be single and/or date since her sexuality and dating life had been repressed. Brown's work clearly encouraged and educated women how to meet potential bachelors.

Not only does Brown encourage dating but she also helped women feel confident so that they may feel more sexy as she writes:

What is a sexy woman? Very simple. She is a woman who enjoys sex. Being sexy means that you accept yourself as a woman . . . with all the functions of a woman. You like to make love, have babies. Nurse them and mother them (or think you would). Being sexy means that you accept all the parts of your body as worthy and lovable. . . your reproductive organs, your breasts, your alimentary tract. You even welcome menstruation as the abiding proof of your fertility.³⁶

Brown's embracement of the female sexual body and womanhood is significant because up until this point women were taught to be ashamed of their bodies, specifically their sexual body, as things like reproduction and menstruation were often things that women were taught

³⁵ Helen G. Brown, "Women Alone? Oh, Come Now! From Sex and the Single Girl." In *Sexual Revolution*, edited by Jeffrey Escoffier, United States: Thunder Mouth's Press, 2003, 72-73.

³⁶ Helen G. Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl*. 50th ed., United States Of America: Barricade Books Inc., 1962, 65.

to be ashamed of.³⁷ In addition, Brown's work also suggests that by dating and exploring sexual acts women will obtain a greater chance and opportunity to actually enjoy sex. As, much like Friedan suggests, in accordance to dated ideologies by the time women could have sex – on the night of her wedding – women often felt ashamed, embarrassed and clueless.³⁸ Thus taking away a women's right to her sexual pleasure and ultimately strips her of her confidence and sexual being.

Brown also attempts to inspire women to embrace their enjoyable sexual experiences and to ignore societal expectations of virginity.³⁹ This is important as virginity and purity were, as stated, an emblem of American tradition and morals. Brown rejects the notion of virginity so that she can encourage all single women to not only have sex but to embrace their sexual experiences and to expose the sexual double standard as men were historically encouraged to embrace their sexual conquests and experiences.⁴⁰ Lastly, Brown also advocated for women to get a job and/or an education:

while you're waiting to marry, or if you never marry, a job can be your love, your happy pill, your means of finding out who you are and what you can do, your play pen, your family, your entrée to a good social life, men and money, the most reliable escape from loneliness (when one more romance goes pfft), and your means of participating, not having your pressed to the glass.⁴¹

Here, Brown's views parallel those found in Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* as she identifies women's void or unhappiness to be linked to a lack of education and ability to provide for oneself. Overall, all three texts share the similar message of taking control of one's sexuality

³⁷ Martha H. Verbrugge, *Active Bodies: A History of Women's Physical Education in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012, 72-73.

³⁸ Helen G. Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl*. 50th th ed. United States Of America: Barricade Books Inc., 1962, 67-68.

³⁹ Ibid, 231.

⁴⁰ Helen G. Brown, *Sex and the Single Girl*. 50th ed., New York: Barricade Books Inc., 1962, 231.

⁴¹ Ibid, 90.

and sexual experiences. It becomes clear through these influential texts that both men and women were embracing a new way of understanding sex and sexuality, which arguably started to shape the sexual revolution in the Sixties as all three works sold thousands of copies and were read by a mass American audience.

It is clear that American's were changing their thoughts surrounding sex and sexuality. Influential authors and sociologists were publishing work that clearly reached and spoke for the average white American man and woman. Hence, for the purpose of this thesis, understanding the ideologies and ways of thinking about sex is an essential element when coming to understand why/how *Playboy* successfully impacted American culture in the Sixties.

Subsequently, it is then important to attempt to define what the sexual revolution was in the Sixties and for the purpose of this thesis I believe that historian Jeffrey Escoffier provides a useful definition of the sexual revolution. Escoffier defines the sexual revolution as something that was radical, political and embraced sexual experiences that went beyond the traditional understanding of heterosexual intercourse within the confines of marriage; as Escoffier defines the sexual revolution as something that supported sex outside of marriage, interracial sex and sex with different genders and/or multiple people.⁴² Escoffier expands his definition by stating that the sexual revolution and its success was reliant on media and social culture. Emphasizing that the sexual revolution was more than just a people's movement, as the sexual revolution "undermined many of the social structures of sexual repression and left to new social patterns,

⁴² Escoffier, Jeffrey. "Introduction." In *Sexual Revolution*, edited by Jeffrey Escoffier, United States: Thunder Mouth's Press, 2003, xi-xii.

attitudes, and ways of sexually interacting."⁴³ Overall, traditional societal understanding of sex and sexual interactions was being challenged and changed.

This demand to change the dominant American attitudes about sex and sexual interactions was ever present in popular culture, specifically print media.⁴⁴ Increasingly through the 1960s and 1970s print media endorsed the sexualization of the female body and the encouragement of sex, desire⁴⁵ and sexual fantasies before marriage. This can be specifically explored through magazine covers, as magazines were, in the 1960s and 1970s, commonly read as a form of entertainment.⁴⁶

For example, this dramatic seismic shift in attitudes was evident in 1979, when a *NewTimes* magazine cover (Figure 2) embraces sexual pleasure, female dominance and sexuality. This cover is significant as the woman is dressed in lingerie, with a leather whip [alluding to a sexual fetish of female domination where a woman has full control of the sexual situation – usually controlling or demanding acts from her partner] and is standing powerfully over the iconic Uncle Sam. Uncle Sam is an emblem of American independence, strength, morality and patriotism.⁴⁷ The image of a promiscuous woman holding a whip and dominating Uncle Sam emphasizes that women were taking a stand and expressing their newfound sexual freedoms by

⁴³ Escoffier, Jeffrey. "Introduction." In *Sexual Revolution*, edited by Jeffrey Escoffier, United States: Thunder Mouth's Press, 2003, xxxiv.

⁴⁴ Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 10 & 31.

⁴⁵ Thomas Frank, *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. United States: The University of Chicago Press, 1997, 20.

⁴⁶ Daniel Marcus, *Happy Days and Wonder Years: The Fifties and the Sixties in Contemporary Cultural Politics*. United States Of America: Rutgers University Press, 2004, 16., Lule, Jack. "History of Magazine Publishing." *Culture and Media* 1.0, no. 5.2.

⁴⁷ Alton Ketchum, "The Search For Uncle Sam." *History Today* 40, no. 4 (April 1, 1990): 20-26, 25-26.

decades end. In addition, the woman featured in the cover is confidently embracing her role, which can be assumed through her body language, as she is making direct eye contact with the camera, her body is squared off to the camera and she is holding a weapon that she appears to know how to use. The woman's pose illustrates confidence, power and dominance, which suggests that other women were ready, comfortable and willing to take on this position. Interestingly, Uncle Sam shares the expression of shock and pleasure on the cover. It can be assumed that his expression of shock (wide eyes and mouth agape) expresses that American's morals of saving sex until marriage is being squashed. While an assumed expression of pleasure, which can be assumed because his body is turned to face the woman, he is not struggling to get out of is his restraints and his mouth is almost in the shape of a smile suggests that even though the symbol of American tradition is being forced to change that it is willing to change and explore the new sexual morals and understandings.



Figure 2: *Decadence: The People's Choice*, 1979.

Women's magazines also featured sexually seductive and scantily dressed women on their covers. *Cosmopolitan* magazine, a popular female magazine,⁴⁸ became increasingly more sexual and promoted promiscuity through their covers. Covers of the magazines are significant as they represent both the image and content of the magazine because it is the first thing an onlooker sees when walking past a magazine rack. Between 1960 and 1979, the magazine covers of *Cosmopolitan* magazine became increasingly more sexualized as the women featured wore less clothing or revealed more sexualized body parts. In addition, the captions on the front cover of *Cosmopolitan* magazine also indicate that the articles in the magazines were becoming more appealing to women's sexuality and sex. For example, in figure 3 the 1960 magazine cover features a female in a bikini, which at the time went against female conservatism, yet the female featured on the cover is posing confidently towards the camera. This confidence can be assumed as her body is turned towards the camera and her arms/hands are not attempting to cover up her body. While the magazine captions on the side remain conservative and do not indicate that there is any sexual material inside the magazine, the cover itself shows the progression of the acceptance of the female body within popular culture and print media.

⁴⁸ Mark Noonan, "Review: The Improbable First Century of *Cosmopolitan* Magazine." *American Studies* 52, no. 1 (2012): 186-87.



Figure 3: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, June 1960., 1.

In 1965, the year Helen Brown became the editor in chief of *Cosmopolitan* magazine, the magazine becomes increasingly more sexualized and provocative. While the cover from September 1965 (figure 4) does not feature a woman in a bikini, she is wearing a low-cut top revealing her cleavage. Her facial expression can be assumed to be sexually seductive as she is looking up at the camera, her lips are pursed, and her arms are drawn in which inherently draws more attention to her cleavage. In addition, one caption on the cover, which is hidden/separated from the other captions, as it is at the bottom, in a smaller font and tucked beside the female on the cover reads “Clothes to Make a Man Hurry Home”. Because the caption is placed beside the woman further confirms that her attire is attractive, intended to be sexy and would make her partner rush home. In addition, the placement and size of the caption indicates that *Cosmopolitan* was starting to change some of the content in the magazine but did so in a slow and indiscrete manner in order to ease their audience into the new magazine content.



Figure 4: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, September 1965., 1.

In figure 5, the 1968 magazine cover becomes more sexually suggestive as both a male and female are featured on the cover in bathing suits. While the woman is in the front and staring at the camera confidently with a smile, her male suitor is squatted behind her appearing only to be interested in her body, as he is staring down at her. Even more significant is the fact that it is not obvious that the couple is married, indicating that they may just be enjoying one another's company.

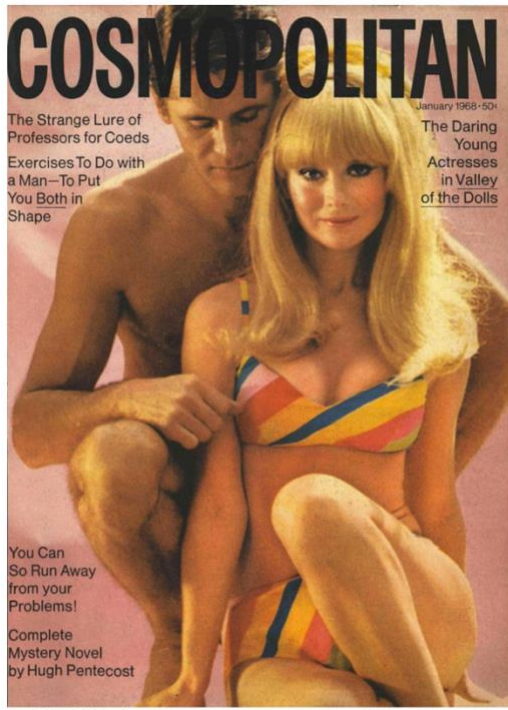


Figure 5: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, January 1968., 1.

The *Cosmopolitan* 1969 July magazine cover (figure 6) features a woman in a knitted bikini, revealing her entire body with the exception of her nipples (because of the knitting pattern). In this photo the woman is posed on the ground, which is infantilizing and reveals innocence and sexuality. While this cover is certainly bridging on nudity, the captions on the side continue to reveal more progressive material in the magazine. One of the captions reads “38 men tell a nice girl like you what turns them on”, this caption reveals that the magazine still wanted to attract the “nice American woman” who was supposedly upholding some traditional American morals while at the same time these women wanted to embrace the idea that they could turn men on sexually through the advice provided in the magazine.

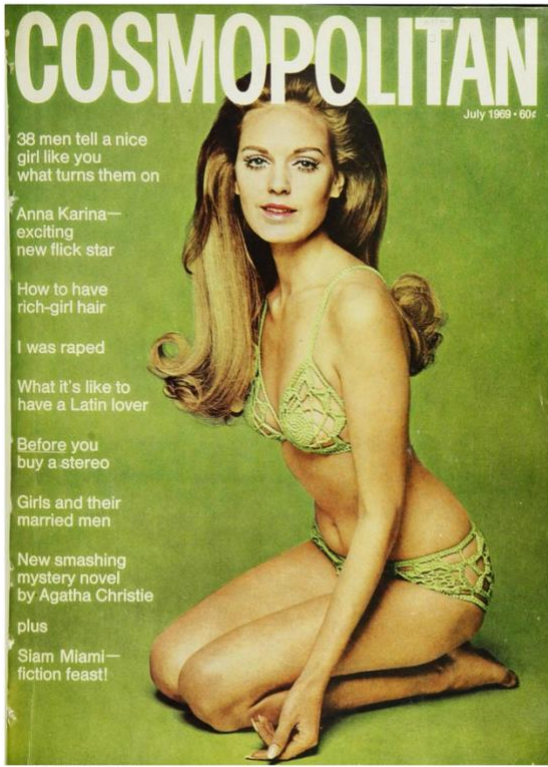


Figure 6: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, July 1969., 1.

In figure 7 the woman featured on the front of *Cosmopolitan* is wearing a revealing bathing suit as her entire back and tailbone is exposed, and she is hugging/holding on to a man that has his hand placed suggestively on the small of her back. While the cover features a sexually suggestive photo, the captions embrace reproductive autonomy and sex. Two captions read: “Fertility Pills are Coming” and “How Sex keeps You Slim”. Both captions share the message that the woman featured on the cover has autonomy over her own reproduction and thus can now partake in sexual activities with the man she is with without the fear of repercussions. It also informs the reader that *Cosmopolitan* magazine supports the changing ideologies surrounding sexuality and reproductive autonomy. As demonstrated in figure 8 the Seventies continued to showcase partially dressed women on their covers and included more captions that were

progressively sexually suggestive and embraced female sexual liberation. This is significant as *Cosmopolitan* magazine was a magazine curated for American women, hence, it demonstrates that men's magazines were not the only ones embracing and/or featuring female sexuality and partially nude bodies.

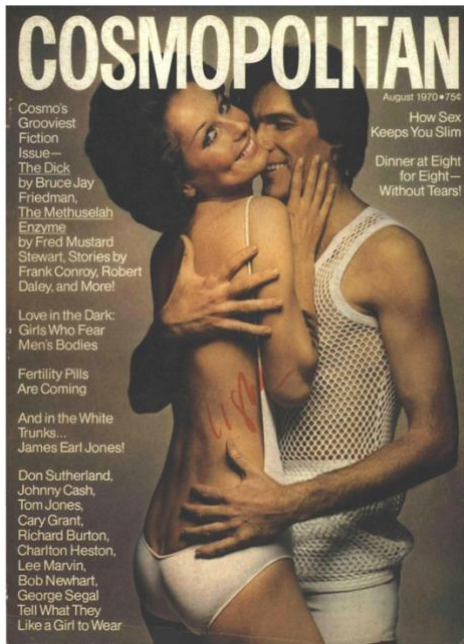


Figure 7: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, August 1970., 1.

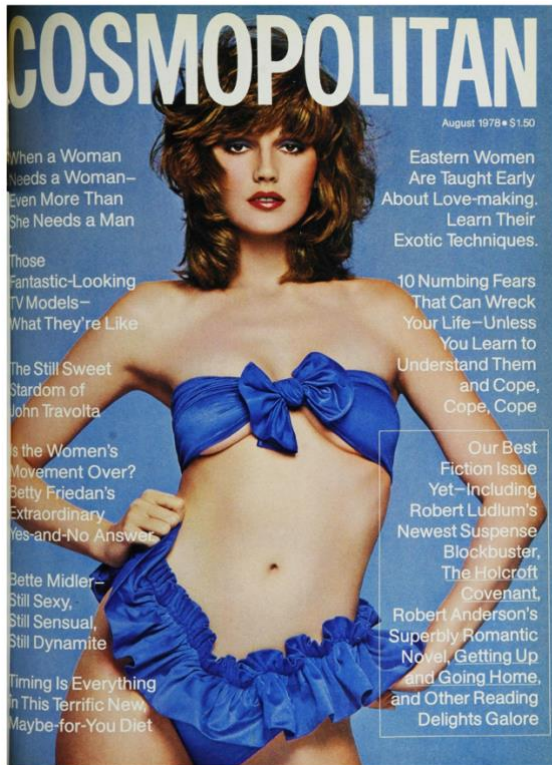


Figure 8: Covers. *Cosmopolitan*, August 1978., 1.

Magazines curated for men were also embracing female sexuality by featuring women in sexy poses and less clothing. Magazines such as *Sports Illustrated* (figures 9, 11, 12, 13) all appear to support the sexual revolution in the 1960s and 1970s by publishing works that embraced partial nudity of women. *Sports Illustrated* is a good example to use for this study as it was a popular men's magazine: "The *Sports Illustrated* 'Swimsuit' edition was first published in February 1964 and it was an immediate success. It has appeared every year since and, according to *The Christian Science Monitor*, an estimated 50 million copies of the swimsuit issue are sold each year."⁴⁹ *Sports Illustrated*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Playboy* magazine covers did not significantly differ from one another during this time. For example, *The Cosmopolitan* cover from 1960 (figure

⁴⁹ Kenneth C. Kammeyer, *A Hypersexual Society: Sexual Discourse, Erotica and Pornography in America Today*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, 77.

3) and the 1964 *Sports Illustrated* cover (figure 9) feature two brunettes with short hair, similar bikinis and similar poses. Neither woman is revealing more skin than the other. In addition, *Playboy* magazine didn't release a cover featuring a bikini until 1962 (figure 10) and it revealed less of the woman's body than that of *Sports Illustrated* and *Cosmopolitan*. While *Playboy* certainly became more pornographic in nature throughout the 1960s and well into the 1970s. All magazines reflect the growing trend of progressiveness and female sexuality as they were becoming more sexualized, the only difference was the magazine's intended audience.



Figure 9: Sports Illustrated . "The Best 1960's Swimsuits." <http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2008/07/09the-best-1960s-swimsuits#>.

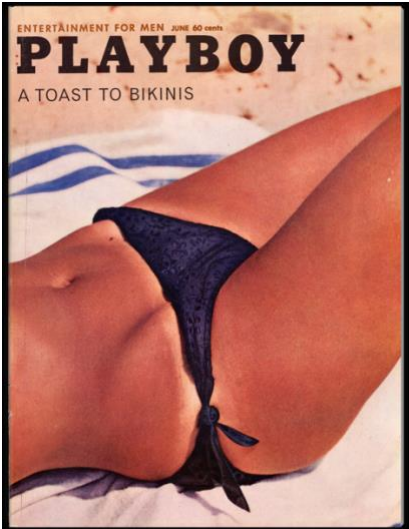


Figure 10: Cover . *Playboy*, June 1962., 1

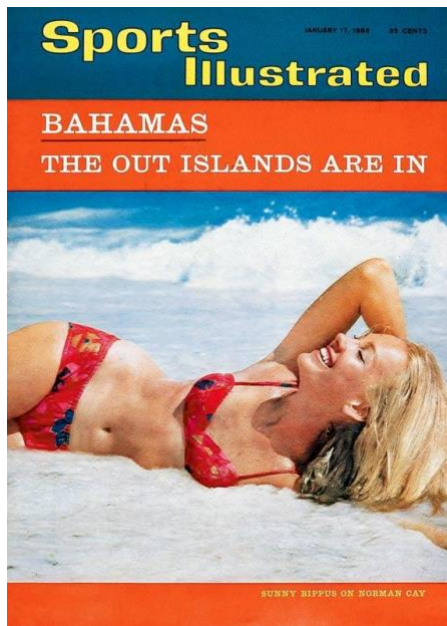


figure 11: Sports Illustrated . "The Best 1960's Swimsuits." <http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2008/07/09the-best-1960s-swimsuits#>.

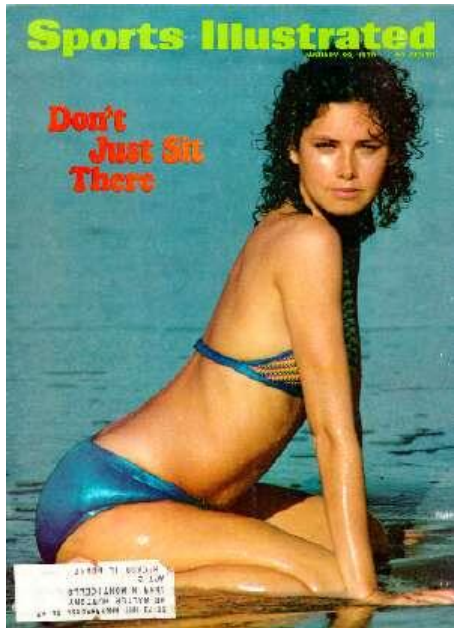


Figure 12: Sports Illustrated . "The Best 1960's Swimsuits." <http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2008/07/09the-best-1960s-swimsuits#>.

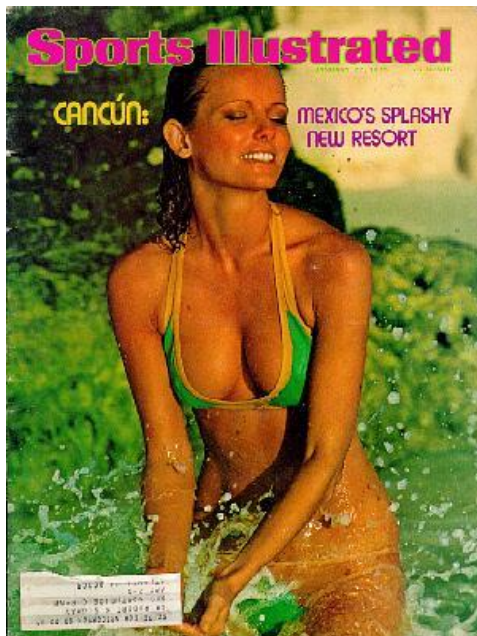


Figure 13: Sports Illustrated . "The Best 1960's Swimsuits." <http://www.si.com/more-sports/photos/2008/07/09the-best-1960s-swimsuits#>.

Much like *Cosmopolitan*, *Sports Illustrated* covers feature women that are gradually posed in more sexualized positions and show more skin, for example the amount of cleavage featured in the covers increases dramatically by 1975.

While popular culture in the form of magazines and print media showcased sex and seemingly powerful, confident and sexy women, it failed to address the sexual freedoms that women were fighting for during the Sixties. For example, while birth control was advertised in print media, women's liberation movements fought for the right to choose whether or not to take birth control, so that they could have autonomy over their bodies.⁵⁰ Before the 1960s birth control was prohibited and considered to be both immoral and criminal. Which forced women to seek reproductive autonomy through other dangerous outlets.⁵¹ In addition, birth control and sex was viewed as an attempt to dissolve traditional American lifestyles not a freeing movement and fundamental right for women. In a 1968 *Reader's Digest* article the birth control pill was compared to a nuclear bomb: "Everyone knows what The Pill is. It is a small object -- yet its potential effect upon our society may be even more devastating than the nuclear bomb."⁵² This comparison is quite drastic as it suggests that sex before marriage would have the same devastating impact as a nuclear bomb, hence both would lead to the destruction of America. Since the birth control pill was closely linked to sex before marriage it exposed a widely held belief that good girls would refrain from using birth control in a means of not only keeping their bodies concealed and pure for marriage but to protect the traditional American way of life. This belief was unrealistic and an unfair depiction of the fight for reproductive autonomy because women fought to have control over their own bodies so that when they decided to have sex, they could determine whether or not they were to get pregnant and this applied to both single

⁵⁰ Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Commentary . *Commentary* 100, no. 5 (November 1995): 53-54, 53.

⁵¹ Linda Gordon, *The Moral Property of Women: The History of Birth Control Politics in America*. United States: University of Illinois Press, 2007, 22., Nancy L. Cohen, *Delirium: The Politics of Sex in America*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2012, 10.

⁵² Liberty Mutual Insurance. "The Pill: American Experience." <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/pill/index.html>.

women and those in a committed relationship or marriage. In addition, if women could control their own bodies, it allowed them to feel more in control and responsible.⁵³ This is explored in a newspaper where college females were interviewed:

As this new freedom was being discussed, the media editorialized somewhat with discussion of what all this sexual freedom meant for the notion of 'nice girls', who, before the pill, were more cautious or did not have sex before marriage. The media asked whether the availability of the pill was putting pressure on women to have sex before marriage. College students, however, would have none of this moralizing. In interviews with the media, they ridiculed the double standard and argued that the pill had only freed women from concerns about pregnancy. They applauded the loosening of traditional dating patterns and courtship rules, claiming that men and women could now be on more equal footing as friends and as sexual partners.⁵⁴

While birth control allowed women to feel more in control of their own bodies it also allowed them to feel liberated from social rules surrounding sexuality.⁵⁵ Statistically, more women were engaging in sexual intercourse before marriage, and virginity was becoming a lost norm.⁵⁶ Hence, women not only wanted to be able to get prescribed birth control, but they also wanted it to be easily accessible. This can be analyzed through a political cartoon (figure 14) published in 1963.

⁵³ Nancy L. Cohen, *Delirium: The Politics of Sex in America*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2012, 11.

⁵⁴ "Mass Media and the Sexual Revolution." In *History of the Mass Media in the United States: An Encyclopedia*, edited by Margaret A. Blanchard, New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 1998, 380.

⁵⁵ Mary Eberstadt, *Adam and Eve after the Pill: Paradoxes of the Sexual Revolution*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012, 14.

⁵⁶ Nancy L. Cohen, *Delirium: The Politics of Sex in America*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2012, 10.



Figure 14: "Cigars, cigarettes, birth control pills..." advertisement, 1963, printed in *On the Pill: A Social History of Oral Contraceptives, 1950-1970*, Elizabeth Watkins, un-paginated.

This political cartoon published in *Playboy* (figure 14) shows a man and a woman on a date in a restaurant. The cartoon illustrates the woman with her hair and makeup done. This suggests that she is on a date. Hence in a lot of ways she represents the ideal single woman that Helen Gurley Brown outlined in her book because she is dressed up and looks good. Next to the table there is a woman selling 'cigarettes, cigars and birth control', suggesting that birth control should be as readily available as other indulgent lifestyle items; as birth control should be as normalized as cigarettes. This cartoon also suggests that sex was a more common thing to partake in after a date or dinner. The Sixties allowed sex to be considered an indulgent act that was no longer reserved for marriage and procreation. Overall, this political cartoon satirizes the

lack of easily accessible birth control. It suggests that if birth control was as accessible as cigarettes, Americans may become addicted to sex just as they were to cigarettes and because cigarettes and cigars were socially accepted it suggests sex could be too.

The sexual revolution clearly demonstrated a growing need for women to be liberated from constraining sexual norms that stemmed from traditional American morals. While the changes included men and women historian Nancy Cohen explained that the sexual revolution was more transformative for women. This was because men were traditionally excused from sexual misconduct before marriage because they faced no physical repercussions of sex, as they could not get pregnant.⁵⁷ However, as birth control was legalized women could finally embrace their sexual liberation because they could control their reproduction⁵⁸ and could sexually express themselves more freely. In addition, women had the potential to correct the way Americans understood American female sexuality as it was often assumed that women needed men to enjoy sex and that they did not enjoy sex just as much as men did.⁵⁹ Which was a myth, by 1960, more studies and articles were being published in magazines and journals to educate Americans that women enjoyed sex just as much as men. Hence, Kinsey was not the only social scientist to study the sexual desires of women: "Science even raised the alarming possibility that women's sexual capacity was greater than that of men: a biologist from the University of California warned the readers of *Nation's Business* magazine in 1952 that 'women can achieve the sex climax up to 100 times as often as a man.'"⁶⁰ As ideologies surrounding women's reproductive autonomy and

⁵⁷ Nancy L. Cohen, *Delirium: The Politics of Sex in America*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2012, 10.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 20.

⁶⁰ Miriam G. Reumann, *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005, 90.

sexuality was changing in the late 1950s and well into the 1960s it arguably set the ideological foundation to suggest men and women to express themselves sexually both privately and in the public spheres. With sex becoming more present in public spheres pornography started becoming more present and accessible.

While pornography had been “illegal” and reserved for underground markets it was now seemingly endorsed in the Sixties and the laws surrounding the distribution of porn continued to change.⁶¹ The emergence of pornography during the late 1950s after the Roth decision muddled feminists’ understanding of liberating female sexuality. This was because women up until this point had been taught to be embarrassed of their bodies and sexuality.⁶² At first pornography seemed to be accepted as a form of embracing female and male sexuality, while simultaneously influencing a new definition of female sexuality. However, as the pornography industry continued to flourish further analysis was made and feminists in the late 1960s and early 1970s began to argue that pornography endorsed “degrading images of women, the romanticization of sexual violence, and the commercialization of sex”⁶³ while simultaneously represented violence and unrealistic depictions of women in demoralizing and victimizing situations.⁶⁴

However, this did not mean that feminists were completely opposed to pornography. Feminists believed that pornography had the potential to sexually liberate women if the women

⁶¹ Sarracino, Carmine, and Kevin M. Scott. *The Porning of America: The Rise of Porn Culture, What it Means, and Where We Go from Here*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008, 49. & Dany Lacombe, *Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism*. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 4.

⁶² Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador & Henry Holt and Company, 1983, 182.

⁶³ Dany Lacombe, *Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism*. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 20.

⁶⁴ Dany Lacombe, *Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism*. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 27 & 30., Sarracino, Carmine, and Kevin M. Scott. *The Porning of America: The Rise of Porn Culture, What it Means, and Where We Go from Here*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008, 173.

participating in the porn industry also felt pleasure and felt that they had the power and the right to consent.⁶⁵ This is explicitly explored in Gloria Steinem's essay *Erotica vs. Pornography* that was first published in 1977. While Steinem recognized that women should not accept their prescribed destiny of child rearing, there was a grey area of separating sex from procreation and marriage because it could be assumed that all forms of sex and sexuality were good, when in fact they were not.⁶⁶ She made this distinction by separating "pornography" from 'erotica':

In short pornography is about an imbalance of power that allows and requires sex to be used as a form of aggression. *Erotica* is a word that can help us to differentiate sex from violence, and therefore rescue sexual pleasure. . . The problem is that there is so little erotica. Women have rarely felt free, powerful, and safe enough to pursue erotic pleasure in our own lives, much less create it in the worlds of film, magazines, arts, books television and popular culture. . .⁶⁷

By separating pornography from erotica, critics such as Steinem made it more obvious that pornography undermined women's power and ability to find pleasure as pornography was/is reliant on female submission and male dominance or power, since much of it depicted male aggression as part of their normal sexual existence.⁶⁸ Steinem further explores how the power dynamic breaches further than obvious representations of power as she writes:

They [images of sex where there is a power dynamic present] may be more subtle: the use of class, race, authority, or body poses to convey conquer and victim; unequal nudity, that leaves one person's body exposed and vulnerable while the other is armored with clothes; or a woman by herself, exposed for an unseen but powerful viewer whom she clearly is trying to please. . . (she is there for her own pleasure or being displayed for someone else's). But blatant or subtle, there is no equal power or mutuality.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Dany Lacombe, *Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism*. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 28.

⁶⁶ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador & Henry Holt and Company, 1983, 240.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 235.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 232.

⁶⁹ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador & Henry Holt and Company, 1983, 231.

Overall, Steinem makes a clear distinction between pornography and erotica. While Steinem supports the sexual liberation and pleasure of women, she continues to specify that it has to be a mutual arrangement where both partners in the interaction are receiving consensual pleasure. Steinem also explores how equal sexuality and pleasure also threatened traditional family life in America: “Both [pornography and erotica] assume that sex can be separated from conception; that human sexuality has additional uses and goals” and that society has refused to accept these notions out of fear that if women have complete control over their sexual bodies and reproduction that it will completely destroy the meaning of family and the ‘natural’ way of being.⁷⁰ While Steinem did not agree with the blatant submission of female sexuality, she stated that feminist resistance against pornography led many critics to wrongly assume that they were fighting against the First Amendment right to make pornography, whereas in reality feminist movements were pushing back against the makers of pornography who profited off of: murder, assault, kidnapping and use of children under the age of consent.⁷¹ Steinem’s thoughts also simultaneously corresponded with women’s groups like Women Against Pornography (WAP), and Women Against Violence in Pornography and Media (WAVPM) that were formed in the late 1970’s.

WAP and WAVPM began to expand their fight on pornography in magazines and advertisements⁷² in the late Seventies. Up until then the fight against pornography was more about the violence and victimization of women. Obviously, preventing producers who profited

⁷⁰ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador & Henry Holt and Company, 1983, 239.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 243.

⁷² Carmine Sarracino, and Kevin M. Scott. *The Porning of America: The Rise of Porn Culture, What it Means, and Where We Go from Here*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008, 174.

off of murder, assault, kidnapping and use of children under the age of consent and/or the endorsement of violence against women was not acceptable. But pornography makers who made profit from women who were seemingly consented and wanted to participate in pornography were stuck in a grey area as advocates against violence in porn struggled to explicitly define what was wrong. Women/feminists wanted women to be released from traditional sexual constraints⁷³ but they wanted to make sure that what they did participate in and endorse was liberating and for the betterment of women. Defining what was acceptable became increasingly difficult as the pornography industry grew and became more complete. It wasn't until Steinem suggested that women photographed alone display form of imbalanced power for the male gaze. Even still it became more difficult to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' forms of pornographic material. As seen earlier in this chapter, it is difficult to distinguish grand differences between the covers of *Cosmopolitan* magazine (a magazine made for women) and the covers of that for *Sports Illustrated* and *Playboy* (magazines both made for men).

Arguably, *Playboy* seemed to be aware of the inability to clearly distinguish between good and bad pornography, as *Playboy* seemed to gear its content to ensure that any potential power imbalance was hidden. Hefner also ensured his philosophy and featured images focused on women seemingly feeling empowered in the magazine. *Playboy* in many ways created a manipulated image of a sexualized utopian where semi to fully nude women who were photographed alone or at parties seemingly looked happy and consented to reveal their bodies to the people surrounding them. Hugh Hefner stated in many different ways that he was

⁷³ Carmine Sarracino, and Kevin M. Scott. *The Porning of America: The Rise of Porn Culture, What it Means, and Where We Go from Here*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008, 176.

creating an industry that supported the sexual liberation of women so that both men and women could enjoy sex and their sexuality equally. For example, in an interview with *Cosmopolitan* magazine Hefner responded to a question about the *Playboy* philosophy:

It's an expression of my own personal views on our puritan heritage here in America. . . And at the heart of that conviction is that society's traditional concept of sex is sick. We've taken the fun out of it by making it either sacred or obscene. It can be something more than that – and it should be . . . For more than two thousand years women have played a less than human role in our society – with the abstract concept of female chastity more important than personal happiness and welfare. Women have historically been the scapegoat for society's sexual fears; they've suffered the most because most of our antisexual heritage has been focused on them. Sexual emancipation and the emancipation of women are directly related to one another.⁷⁴

Hefner in his interviews carefully articulated his language to appear as though he supported and endorsed the empowerment of women and women's sexuality. He maintained this message through his magazine as the women were often featured alone; hence, there was no obvious representation of being dominated by men which in turn avoided the endorsement of violence. In addition, models interviewed by *Cosmopolitan* magazine in a 1968 article seemed to enjoy their experiences. Some Playmates who interviewed for *Cosmopolitan* stated that they not only enjoyed their experiences but that they felt more confident and appreciated the attention they got from men. For example, Reagan Wilson who was a Playmate October 1967 stated in an interview

'When I was in Missoula County High, I was tall and skinny, and none of the boys wanted to go out with me. I used to hate my big bust because I could never wear clothes well. The picture allowed me to take advantage of my figure; now I get attention from boys who never gave me a tumble before' . . . Kelly Burke (August 1966). 'But after the picture

⁷⁴ Irwin Theodore, "Cosmopolitan Interviews Hugh M. Hefner, Playboy's Controversial Editor," *Cosmopolitan*, May, 1966, 76-80, <https://subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/login?URL=?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/cosmopolitan-interviews-hugh-m-hefner-playboys/docview/1824577611/se-2?accountid=11233>, 77.

was published, I found I had a lot more self-confidence . . . [fellows at her office commented] 'We didn't know we had a sex symbol around for three years'.⁷⁵

Not only did women seem to enjoy working for *Playboy*, but it offered them an opportunity to make a decent wage, as many single women during the Fifties and early Sixties were forced into low paying and low status careers as there were no other opportunities for them.⁷⁶ Even though working for *Playboy* meant that those women were postponing marriage and children it coincided with American socio trends that demonstrated that the 1960s encouraged women to work for more economical freedom.⁷⁷

Overall, it becomes increasingly clear that the sexual revolution was not only a change in the way that Americans understood and partook in sex and sexual activities, but it was also a mainstreamed phenomenon that continued to manipulate and articulate different meanings of female sexual liberation. Key works like *The Kinsey Reports*, *The Feminine Mystique* and *Sex and the Single Girl* all demonstrated that women were eager to partake in sex outside the confines of marriage and procreation and demand more autonomy over their bodies. However, these changes were only half embraced in popular culture as magazine covers in particular only endorsed and supported the partial to full nudity of female bodies and sexuality. When pornography became more accessible in the late Fifties feminist groups struggled to understand and comprehend the damaging effects it had on female sexuality and liberation, and it wasn't until the Seventies that leading feminists like Gloria Steinem and groups like WAP and WAVPM

⁷⁵ Women's Interests, "And made two non-Playmate Appearances in Playboy Layouts, because she says, 'I get a plug for my pictures and that kind of publicity is very valuable. . .,'" *Cosmopolitan*, March, 1968, 112-115, <https://subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/login?URL=?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/made-two-non-playmate-appearances-playboy-layouts/docview/1824573677/se-2?accountid=11233>, 113.

⁷⁶ Backhouse, Constance, and David H. Flaherty, eds. *Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States*. Canada: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992, 68.

⁷⁷ Nancy L. Cohen, *Delirium: The Politics of Sex in America*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2012, 16.

fought against the pornography industry to ensure that females who partook in porn felt equally powerful to their male counterparts and the male gaze. Above all else, Hugh Hefner seemed cognisant of these changes and norms and constructed his magazine and enterprise to “follow the rules” and continually appear to reinforce the ideology that he was merely supporting and assisting the liberation of female sexuality. While simultaneously curating a specific *Playboy* audience to endorse and continue changing American norms.

Chapter 3: The Construction of the *Playboy* Bachelor

While men were traditionally excused for sexual promiscuity before marriage, specifically during the Second World War,⁷⁸ they were still expected to marry and become the breadwinners of the household.⁷⁹ After the Second World War and during the Cold War, there was a push to retain and reinforce traditional gender roles and family life, as it was a symbol of security and normalcy.⁸⁰ For men this meant that they were supposed to maintain the role of an educated breadwinner that would settle down with a suitable woman and start a family.⁸¹ This can be specifically analyzed through popular culture.

Like magazines, film and television presented images of the ideal masculine male that men in real life were supposed to look up to/replicate.⁸² These ideal men were often depicted in traditional gender roles that required them to be strong and independent.⁸³ This can be specifically explored through the analysis of popular TV shows that were aired in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These TV shows depicted men in traditional roles as husband, father, breadwinner and an authority figure, thus reflecting what social institutions wanted Americans to replicate. For example, in the 1964 to 1974 sitcom *The Brady Bunch* (figure 15) shown on American Broadcasting Company (ABC) for five seasons, replicated the perfect traditional American family.

⁷⁸ Marilyn E. Hegarty, *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality During World War II*. United States: New York University Press, 2008, 89.

⁷⁹ Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012, 4-5.

⁸⁰ John R. Greene, *America in the Sixties*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010, 4.

⁸¹ Maurizio Vaudagna, "Family and Nation in America." *Journal of American History and Politics* 3 (March 2, 2020): 1-10, 3.

⁸² Harry M. Benshoff, and Sean Griffin. *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*. United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 258.

⁸³ Ibid, 276.



Figure 15: ABC News, *Photos: Brady Bunch Cast, Then and Now*, ABC News Entertainment.

The Brady Bunch was a symbol of the “all-American family” because it was reminiscent of the suburban American dream. Where the husband and wife married young, yet were financially stable enough to have an abundance of daughters and sons, dressed conservatively, and always appeared happy and content in their practical suburban home, which included practical luxury items such as a family vehicle and a dog.⁸⁴ Even though the sexual revolution was well underway in the United States at the time, *The Brady Bunch* recycled tropes from earlier 1950s’ sitcoms, such as *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* and *Leave It To Beaver*, with its emphasis on family cohesiveness, easily resolved dilemmas, and happy endings. While *The Brady Bunch* was a symbol of ideal family life and the nostalgia of the 1950’s where everything was perceived to be

⁸⁴ Terry H. Anderson, *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in American From Greensboro to Wounded Knee*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995, 22-23.

“perfect” and reminiscent of tradition, the show failed to reflect the true nature of the 1960s and the transition of lifestyle choices.⁸⁵ Other popular TV shows like *Father Knows Best* and *My Three Sons* depicted the father not only as the breadwinner but the unquestionable authority of the home.⁸⁶ Overall, family sitcoms and TV shows from the 1950s, 1960s and even into the 1970s reinforced traditional gender roles that placed women in domestic roles, and men in breadwinner roles.⁸⁷ Hence, reinforcing traditional gender spheres regardless of the changing attitudes surrounding family life and the roles of men and women in society. *Father Knows Best*, *The Brady Bunch* and *My Three Sons* failed to combat men’s changing ideologies surrounding sex, marriage and lifestyle choices because they only featured men in traditional family settings. This is significant as the United States Census Bureau states that after 1960 there was a steady decline in the number of men who chose to get married;⁸⁸ regardless of the fact that between 1950 and 1960 the amount of single people over the age of 14 grew by 2 million.⁸⁹ Demonstrating that regardless of the increase of single people in America, these single people failed to reflect traditional family life as featured on television. Instead, most of these single people chose to avoid marriage until later in life.

⁸⁵ Daniel Marcus, *Happy Days and Wonder Years: The Fifties and the Sixties in Contemporary Cultural Politics*. United States Of America: Rutgers University Press, 2004, 200-201.

⁸⁶ Beth Olson, and William Douglas. "The Family on Television: Evaluation of Gender Roles in Situation Comedy." *Sex Roles* 36, no. 5/6 (1997): 409-27, 411.

⁸⁷ Andrea Press, "Gender and Family in Television's Golden Age and Beyond." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 625, no. 1 (September 2009): 139-50, 141., Mary B. Haralovich, "Sitcoms and Suburbs: Positioning of the 1950's Homemakers." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11, no. 1 (June 5, 2009): 61-83, 61.

⁸⁸ "Figure MS-1a Men’s marital status." census.gov.
<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/time-series/demo/families-and-households/ms-1a.pdf>.

⁸⁹ "Marital Status of the Population of the United States: 1960." Supplementary Reports . *1960 Census of Population*, September 11, 1961.

Due to the changing ideologies in the Sixties, particularly the postponement of marriage provided an opportunity to reconfigure what the single American man looked and acted like. Historian John Greene studies how the changing ideologies surrounding being a single male/bachelor were embraced by both the sexual revolution and Hugh Hefner:

For many Americans, the sexual revolution fit nicely with their newly acquired life of luxury. Many upwardly mobile professional men adopted a flamboyant lifestyle, living in garishly decorated 'bachelor pads' (where the focal piece of furniture in the apartment was a gigantic bed) and focusing their leisure time on the excitement of the sexual conquest. They met – usually in the new 'single bars' . . . young, miniskirted veterans of the sexual revolution, and as ready for a causal relationship as were their temporary suitors. Aided by the tremendous popularity in the 1960s of *Playboy* magazine, which openly argued for the virtues of this lifestyle.⁹⁰

Arguably, Hugh Hefner embraced this change and started to manifest and depict a new single male/bachelor by writing and philosophising about American ideologies surrounding sex, manhood and modernity within the sexual revolution. Hefner's ideas were supported by not only his male readers but also some sexual psychologists.⁹¹

The bachelor pad mentioned in historian John Greene's work is specifically explored and endorsed in *Playboy's* magazine. Biographer and historian Steven Watts recognizes that Hugh Hefner attempted to embrace and give a voice to the new "restless" single male that desired a life of abundance and freedom before fulfilling traditional roles within the home.⁹² This is clearly explored by analyzing Hefner's message to his readers in his first published magazine:

If you're a man between the ages of 18 and 80, PLAYBOY is meant for you. If you like your entertainment served up with humor, sophistication and spice, PLAYBOY will become a very special favorite. We want to make clear from the very start, we aren't a 'family magazine'. If you're somebody's sister, wife, or mother-in-law and picked us up by

⁹⁰ John R. Greene, *America in the Sixties*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010. 142-142.

⁹¹ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 177-179.

⁹² Ibid, 173.

mistake, please pass us along to the man in your life and get back to our *ladies home companion* . . . Most of today's 'magazines for men' spend all their time out-of-door – thrashing through thorny thickets or splashing about in fast flowing streams. We'll be out there too, occasionally, but we do not mind telling you in advance – we plan on spending most of our time inside. We like our apartment. We enjoy mixing up cocktails and *hors d'oeuvre* or two, putting a little mood music on the phonograph, and inviting in a female acquaintance for a quiet discussion of Picasso, Nietzsche, jazz, sex . . . Affairs of state will be out of our province. We don't expect to solve any world problems or prove any great moral truths. If we are able to give the American male a few extra laughs and a little diversion from the anxieties of the Atomic Age, we'll feel we've justified our existence.⁹³

This is significant because Hugh Hefner – in the debut issue of *Playboy* - sets the standard and image of his reader. In this message Hefner kyboshes any idea that the magazine is founded on traditional lifestyle choices from the 1950s – that were often depicted in popular television shows. This is specifically highlighted when *Playboy* emphasizes that the magazine won't be outside doing yard work, which is reminiscent of the suburbs, family/marriage life and the role of husbands. The message also suggests that there is more to life than just marriage and traditional ways of living; as the magazine suggests cocktails, parties and sex is more relaxed and enjoyable. More importantly the message stresses the underlying importance of sophistication and success. *Playboy* endorsed a lifestyle for men that encouraged them to enjoy their success and financial freedom before they began supporting a family. This can be explored in a December 1960 cartoon by Dempsey published in *Playboy* (Figure 16). The cartoon features a male dressed in rather affluent casual attire, as he appears to be wearing dress pants, a folded scarf and house coat. His apartment is clean, features minimal Christmas decorations because he is assumed to be a bachelor and features some [arguably iconic] *Playboy* bachelor items that are often featured in *Playboy* magazine like the pipes on the side table, a glass of wine on the coffee table

⁹³ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 71.

and a fireplace. However, what is most significant is that Santa Claus is carrying a naked woman in his sack to gift to the man. Showing that getting a naked woman into his bachelor pad is quite easy and embraced even by Santa, who is traditionally a childhood character that is supposed to represent goodness and happiness.



Figure 16: Playboy, *"And to think, Santa, that I didn't believe in you"*, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, 1960, 55.

Themes of being a successful, sophisticated bachelor are present throughout the 1960s publications of *Playboy*. Hugh Hefner not only stated this in his first magazine, but each subsequent magazine was curated to continually reinforce this ideology of living a "bachelor" lifestyle.

This bachelor lifestyle can be explored through different advertisements and articles in *Playboy* magazine, as Hefner wrote and curated a team that were seemingly devoted to ensuring that all images, advertisements and articles in his magazines were geared towards teaching his male readers how to dress, entertain and host parties. In doing so, Hugh Hefner redefined what it meant to be a single bachelor in America.

One way that *Playboy* encouraged proper gentleman attire was by creating and advertising its own clothing and accessory line to sell to its readers. This is significant as it establishes *Playboy* as more than just a space/place for men, but as a representable brand for them to wear and inherently endorse and support. For example, by wearing the *Playboy* club tie (figure 17) the wearer inherently sends a message to onlookers that he supports the *Playboy* company. *Playboy* also sold ski sweaters (figure 18), perfume (figure 18), cufflinks, pins (figure 19), shirts (figure 20) and other household items (figure 20). While *Playboy* created its own branded line it is important to note that *Playboy* was actually successful in selling their branded items, emphasizing the eagerness of the readers to represent the brand. The success was noted in a 1962 *Playboy* philosophy article written by Hugh Hefner: "We first became aware that PLAYBOY was developing into something more than a magazine when readers began purchasing *Playboy* products in considerable quantities: everything from cuff links, ties, sport shirts, tuxedos and bar accessories to playing cards, personalized matches and stickers for their car windows."⁹⁴ Overall, it becomes clear that Hefner was cognisant of the influence he had on his male readers and how it changed their lifestyles. Thus, informing him that he had the ability to change

⁹⁴ Hugh Hefner, "The Playboy Philosophy: On our ninth anniversary Playboy's editor-publisher spells out - for friends and critics alike- our guiding principles and editorial credo." *Playboy*, December 1962., 73-200.

sociological ways of thinking and being for his male readers as they not only indulged in his magazine by looking at the semi to fully nude women but that they were reading the content and taking his advice seriously enough to purchase his brand and represent it. Hefner's ability to influence his reader is also apparent through the advertisements and guiding articles about fashion and entertaining.

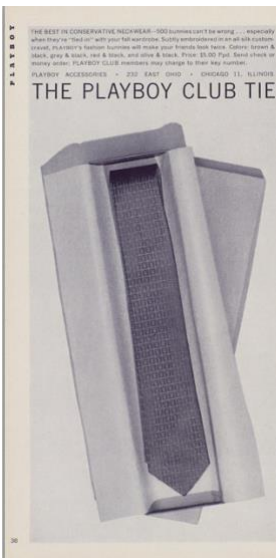


Figure 17: Playboy, *The Playboy Club Tie*, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1960, 38.



Figure 18: Playboy, *The Playboy Ski Sweater*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1962, 202. & Playboy, *Playmate Perfume*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1962, 202.

PLAYBOY PAJAMA BAG



Playfully practical gift for your playmate—a six-foot-tall PLAYBOY rabbit who earns his keep by storing her pajamas in his zipper-back head. Dressed for decorating wall or bed in black felt tuxedo, with studs and cuff links. \$4 ppd.

Shall we enclose a gift card in your name?

Send check or money order to:
PLAYBOY PRODUCTS
 232 East Ohio St.
 Chicago 11, Illinois

Playboy Club Keyholders: Please specify your key number when charging.



THE PLAYMATE PIN

Winning way to pin your favorite playmate. A miniature PLAYBOY rabbit that will remind her of you every time she wears it. In black enamel on rhodium; safety clasp. \$2 ppd.

Shall we enclose a gift card in your name?

Send check or money order to:
PLAYBOY PRODUCTS
 232 East Ohio St. Chicago 11, Illinois.

Playboy Club Keyholders: Please specify your key number when charging.

Figure 19: Playboy, *Playboy Pajama Bag*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, January 1962, 142. & Playboy, *The Playmate Pin*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, January 1962, 142.

Look No Further Than PLAYBOY!

- A. **Playboy Coffee Mug**, \$2.50
- B. **Playboy Beer Mug**, \$5.15
- C. **Playboy Golf Putter**, 122
 blue, black, green,
 lemon, red or white
- D. **Playboy Shirt** in tan, powder blue, black, green,
 Sizes small, medium, large, extra large, 16
- E. **Playmate Shirt** in tan, powder blue, black, green,
 lemon, red or white
- Sizes small, medium and large, 15
- F. **Playboy Gourmet Cookbook**, 112.50
- G. **Betside Playboy**, 16
- H. **Playmate Garter**, 12
- I. **Playboy Playing Cards** (two decks, boxed), 13
- J. **Playboy Imprinted Matchbox**, 25 books imprinted
 with your name (limit 25 spaces), 13
- K. **Playboy Tie Links**, 15
- L. **Playboy Tie Tack**, \$2.50
- M. **Playboy Cuff Links** and **Tie Tack Set**, 17
- N. **Playboy Tie**, 19.50
- O. **Playboy Cuff Links** and **Tie Bar Set**, 17
- P. **Playmate Necklace**, 15.50
- Q. **Playmate Bracelet**, \$3.50
- R. **Playboy Key Chain**, 13.50
- S. **Playmate Ankle Bracelet**, \$3.50
- T. **Vargas lithograph**, one of a six

Full color. Complete set, suitable for framing, 125

All jewelry items of black enamel on polished rhodium.
Please specify code letter, quantity, size and color (where choice is given).



Send check or money order to: **PLAYBOY PRODUCTS Department C**
232 East Ohio Street Chicago, Illinois 60611
Playboy Club keyholders may charge by enclosing key number with order.

In addition, to selling branded fashion, *Playboy* also published articles to encourage men to dress properly and to the standards of new fashion trends. This can be examined in an October 1962 issue where *Playboy* published the article: “*Playboy’s* Fall and Winter Fashion Forecast: The Definite Statement on Coming Trends in Men’s Wear and Accessories” by Robert

Green. Green outlined in detail [color, pattern, season, length, number of buttons, folds/creases] what the new fashion statements would be for that year.⁹⁵ At the end of the article, Green reinforces the importance of style by stating that these fashion trends are for men with the “gift of garb”⁹⁶ meaning that if men chose to follow his fashion trends they will look distinct, stand out in a sophisticated manner and presumably attract more women. In a November 1964 issue, author Robert Green reported on yearly vacation fashion trends, suggesting that proper fashion and attire will allow the reader to have sex with the woman he chooses, as the article features well-dressed men who are seemingly courting semi-nude women who appear to be dazed by the attractiveness of their male counterpart.⁹⁷ This theme is carried throughout the Sixties. In the September 1967 *Playboy* issue another article by Robert Green that summarizes college fashion trends for those attending post-secondary school. This iterates that the *Playboy* reader is also youthful and educated. The article not only supplies an itemized list of closet essentials, such as the amount of dress shirts and pants to purchase, but it also educates the reader on how they need to adjust their wardrobe to their school district and social status, Green writes:

Now that you know where you stand in relation to the over-all collegiate clothing average, strengthen your wardrobe with selections appropriate to the area in which you’ll be studying. THE NORTHEAST: Once prime exponents of conservative campus wear, Ivy Leagues have pulled a reverse fashion play and now affect a more casual – but not sloppy – approach to classroom clothing.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Robert I. Green, "Playboy's Fall and Winter Fashion Forecast: The Definite Statement on Coming Trends in Men's Wear and Accessories." *Playboy*, October 1962., 85-190.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 188.

⁹⁷ Robert Green, "Vacation in Style: The Tops in Men's Resortwear engagingly counterpointed by the topless in women's." *Playboy*, November 1964. , 85-173, 86.

⁹⁸ Robert Green, "Back to Campus: Our Annual Autumnal Survey of Classic Revivals and New Directions for the Academic Year." *Playboy*, September 1967. , 138-44, 144.

Upon closer inspection it becomes increasingly clear that *Playboy* was conscious about the way its male readers should dress while at work, school and on vacation in order to maintain the image of wealth, sophistication, bachelorhood and success.

This can also be examined in the cartoons *Playboy* published. In a 1962 cartoon (figure 21) a man and a woman are walking out of the woods after they presumably had sex. This can be assumed because the woman's blouse is unbuttoned, she is holding her shoes implying she had been undressing. While the man is walking out with a clothing rack and an extra pair of trousers which suggests that before this image was "captured" the man and woman had been naked. What is most significant about this cartoon is that the man appears to be fully prepared to both change his clothes in the event they become ruined and/or is prepared to properly fold and hang his clothes to prevent them from becoming unkept. This cartoon reiterates the message that regardless of the situation the *Playboy* bachelor is in, he is always prepared to look his best. Hence, reinforcing the importance of maintaining the bachelor image.

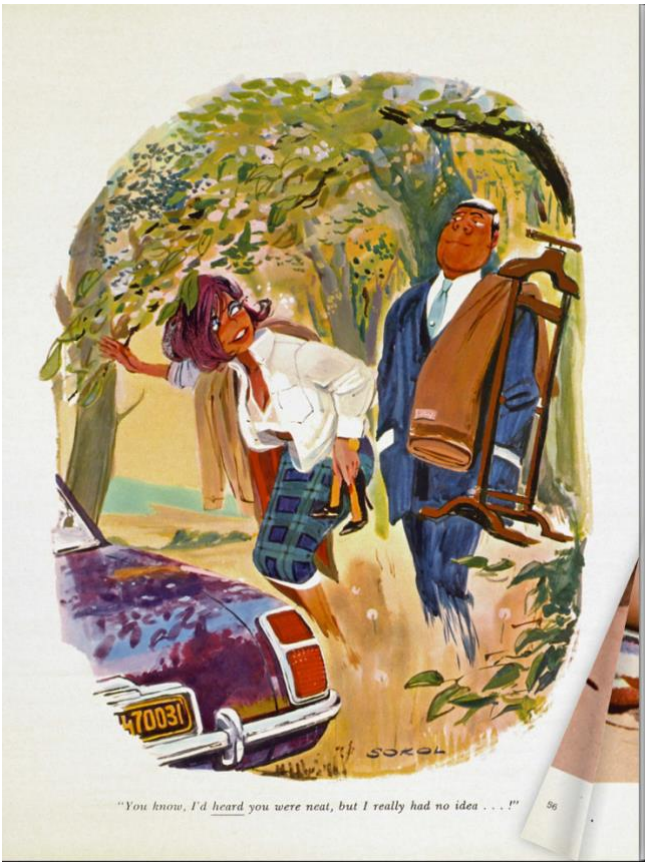


Figure 21: Playboy, *You know, I heard you were neat, but I really had no idea*, 1962, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, June 1962, 55.

Not only did *Playboy* write about changing fashion trends but the magazine also included an abundance of advertisements geared towards men's fashion. For example, in a 1960s mens bathing suit ad (figure 22) each swimsuit is geared and categorized for different types of men; the only exclusion is the man in the scuba outfit captioned "This is the old look".⁹⁹ Which emphasizes that the men who refused to adjust their attire to the trending summer fashion styles those men would look as outlandish as the scuba diver in the lineup. Again, reiterating that in order to fit into the *Playboy* image of a bachelor the audience/reader needed to be aware of

⁹⁹ Playboy, *Trimwear by McGregor*, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, June 1960, 84-85.

their own appearance and take pride in their attire in means of adjusting to the changing attitudes surrounding sex and be welcomed into the *Playboy* world of bachelorhood.



Figure 22: *Playboy*, *Trimwear by McGregor*, 1960, *Playboy Magazine*: Hugh M. Hefner, June 1960, 84-85.

Another way *Playboy* attempted to teach its readers about fashion and accessories was through their “Merry Christmas Gifts” section. For example, the “Merry Christmas Gifts” published in the December 1960 (figure 23) issue includes items that suit the bachelor lifestyle. The gifts featured in a 1960 issue (figure 23) are a bar set, cologne, a shoe polishing kit, pipes and household items like a game of chess. All of these gifts represent luxury, fashion and décor. For instance, the bar set is for someone who understands how to properly mix a drink, which is something that *Playboy* writes about in its magazines. The cologne and shoe polishing relate to a standard of fashion that *Playboy* wanted their readers to uphold, and the décor also suggests that these gifts are well suited for men living in a bachelor pad as they would be responsible for decorating their home. These items are featured repeatedly throughout the Sixties, to maintain a fluid message and guiding ideas. While over time (figure 24, from December 1964) the items become more modernized as more electronics become featured in the “Merry Christmas Gifts”

[illegible][illegible]

54

While *Playboy* coached its readers on how to dress and why, it also taught them how to entertain guests and how to become an ideal host. *Playboy* did so through advertisements and articles about cooking, mixology and party etiquette. *Playboy* taught men how to cook and prepare various cocktails so that they could host proper dinner parties or please their guests. For example, in the December 1962 magazine an entire article featured how to make a Christmas dinner flambe complete with desserts and accompanying cocktails.¹⁰⁰ What is unique about these articles is that they breached traditional gender roles in America. As traditionally, women were the ones to prepare meals and drinks for guests because it was a domestic role.¹⁰¹ However, because *Playboy* encouraged men to live a bachelor lifestyle, they also encouraged them to do so “properly” and with sophistication, which meant being able to cook and prepare different foods and drinks for their guests. This is repeated throughout the Sixties, as the holiday issue in December 1967 also featured recipes for hosting a classy dinner party. Author Thomas Mario writes: “Today, men who’ve feasted on chukar partridges, Alaskan bear and Scotch grouse and who’ve regularly explored gourmet centers, whose shelves are loaded with Indian pappadums, African mangos . . .”¹⁰² What is significant about this holiday addition is the exoticness of the recipes and descriptions because it suggests that the reader has international experience, money to spend on international/imported foods and has had the opportunity to eat at fine dining restaurants to experience things like Alaskan bear. While the recipes again sustain the importance of being a well-rounded bachelor and hosting proper dinner parties it also

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Mario, "Applying a Light Touch to Holiday Fare with a Flare: The Christmas Dinner Flambe." *Playboy*, December 1962., 88-204.

¹⁰¹ Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012, 103.

¹⁰² Thomas Mario, "Far-Flung Fling." *Playboy*, December 1967.,141-45, 141.

suggested that in order to meet the standards of a *Playboy* bachelor one needed to be successful and have a disposable income to support such lavish pantry items.

Another way in which *Playboy* taught its readers how to be a good host was by showing them how to make proper drinks. For example, in figure 25, 7-Up features an advertisement in a 1962 *Playboy* magazine that informed the host about why 7-Up is preferred as a mix for whiskey. The ad also features all the guests in the background having a good time while drinking 7-Up and whiskey, as the bottles are found on the coffee table. Overall, the ad suggests that a simple soda choice could impact whether or not one's guests have a good time at the party. *Playboy* also taught its readers how to make a good drink by providing bartending guides in some of their magazines. In the December 1964 issue, *Playboy* published a "Southern Comfort Barmate: Home Bartenders Guide to Expert Drink Making" that taught the reader different tricks to improve their drink making. Covering such issues as the difference between different kinds of ingredients like sugar and when to shake versus mix different drinks.¹⁰³ The article also provided the reader with various different recipes that could be made at home.¹⁰⁴ The inclusion of these cocktail-making techniques also suggested a level of affluence as the drinks required different ingredients, mixology tools and knowledge about what one is doing.

¹⁰³ "Southern Comfort Barmate: Home Bartenders Guide to Expert Drink Making." *Playboy*, December 1964., 59-70.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.



Figure 25: Playboy, 7-Up, 1960, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1962, 9.

In addition to its coverage of cocktail tips, *Playboy* included snippets throughout their magazine to help men become more skilled at entertaining in social settings. For example, *Playboy* features a section devoted to party jokes¹⁰⁵ which suggested that if men were able to continually make conversations or share good jokes, they will be more liked at parties and be able to make themselves more sociable.

Uniquely, *Playboy* also published advertisements titled “What Sort of Man Reads Playboy” and they frequently featured a well-dressed and successful looking young man that was usually attracting the attention of a female onlooker. The caption often provided statistics about the importance of the product and how it relates to the success of the male featured in the ad and its relevance to *Playboy* readers. For example, in figure 26 the man featured in the ad is

¹⁰⁵ "Playboy's Party Jokes." Humour. *Playboy*, January 1962., 82., "Playboy's Party Jokes." Humour . *Playboy*, August 1964., 76., "Playboy's Party Jokes." Humour. *Playboy*, September 1967., 134.

smelling what appears to be either cologne or after shave while he clearly maintains the undivided attention of the attractive salesclerk behind the counter. The man in the ad is well-dressed/ groomed and physically fit, which [again] suggests that all *Playboy* readers should also uphold this image and care about not only what they look like but what they smell like. As stated in the ad, a man's appearance could be the difference "between a nod and a nay in a business deal or social maneuver."¹⁰⁶ In figure 27, the young man appears to be shopping for a new television set with an attractive female who is presumed to be single as there is no visible wedding ring on her finger. What is significant is that the caption reads: "Facts: Color-TV ownership among PLAYBOY households is three times that of the national average. And a higher percent of PLAYBOY households purchase new TV sets within the last twelve months."¹⁰⁷ This suggests that men who read *Playboy* are wealthy enough to uphold to the standards of owning new and up to date technology in their home and should strive to own the best entertainment set. The language also suggests that if one is unable to afford a new television set that they are not worthy of being a *Playboy* reader. A final example of the ideal *Playboy* male reader can be analyzed in figure 28, as the man featured in this advertisement is a college student. Again, the advertisement shares a similar message, that the *Playboy* reader is youthful, wealthy and successful. This can be assumed in this ad because the featured male is leaning up against a red sports car with the hood popped, suggesting that the engine in the vehicle is worth showing off. The model is wearing dress pants and holding a matching suit jacket while he unknowingly attracts the attention of women walking past. The caption also reiterates a similar message by

¹⁰⁶ *Playboy, What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1964, *Playboy Magazine*: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1964, 111.

¹⁰⁷ *Playboy, What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1964, *Playboy Magazine*: Hugh M. Hefner, November 1964, 79.

stating that the *Playboy* college reader will always have some of the highest grades in the courses he takes and will easily court attractive women.¹⁰⁸ Overall, these “What Sort of Man Reads Playboy” advertisements only maintains the creation of the ideal *Playboy* bachelor as someone who is successful, a womanizer, wealthy and is cognisant of his own appearance in the means of attracting desirable females.

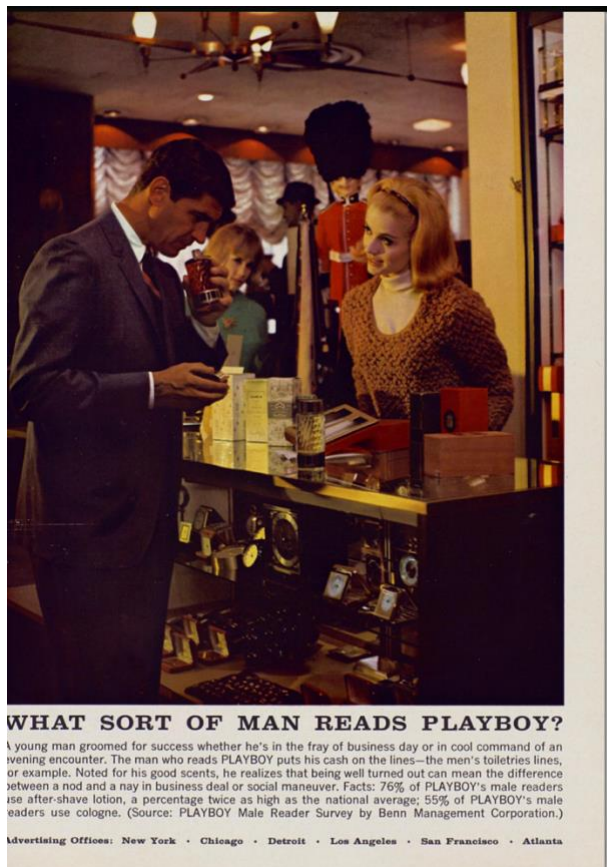


Figure 26: Playboy, *What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, December 1964, 111.

¹⁰⁸ Playboy, *What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1967, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, September 1967, 101.



WHAT SORT OF MAN READS PLAYBOY?

A young man in the prime time of his life, the PLAYBOY reader moves in just the right set when looking for entertainment. To brighten the picture even further, his quest for quality is amplified by his power to purchase. Facts: Color-TV ownership among PLAYBOY households is three times that of the national average. And a higher percentage of PLAYBOY households purchased new TV sets within the last twelve months than any other magazine surveyed by Starch. Give your "commercial" the permanence of print. Place it in PLAYBOY—rated as today's favorite entertainment magazine for men of means. (Source: 1964 Starch Consumer Magazine Report.)

Advertising Offices: New York • Chicago • Detroit • Los Angeles • San Francisco • Atlanta

Figure 27: Playboy, *What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, November 1964, 79.

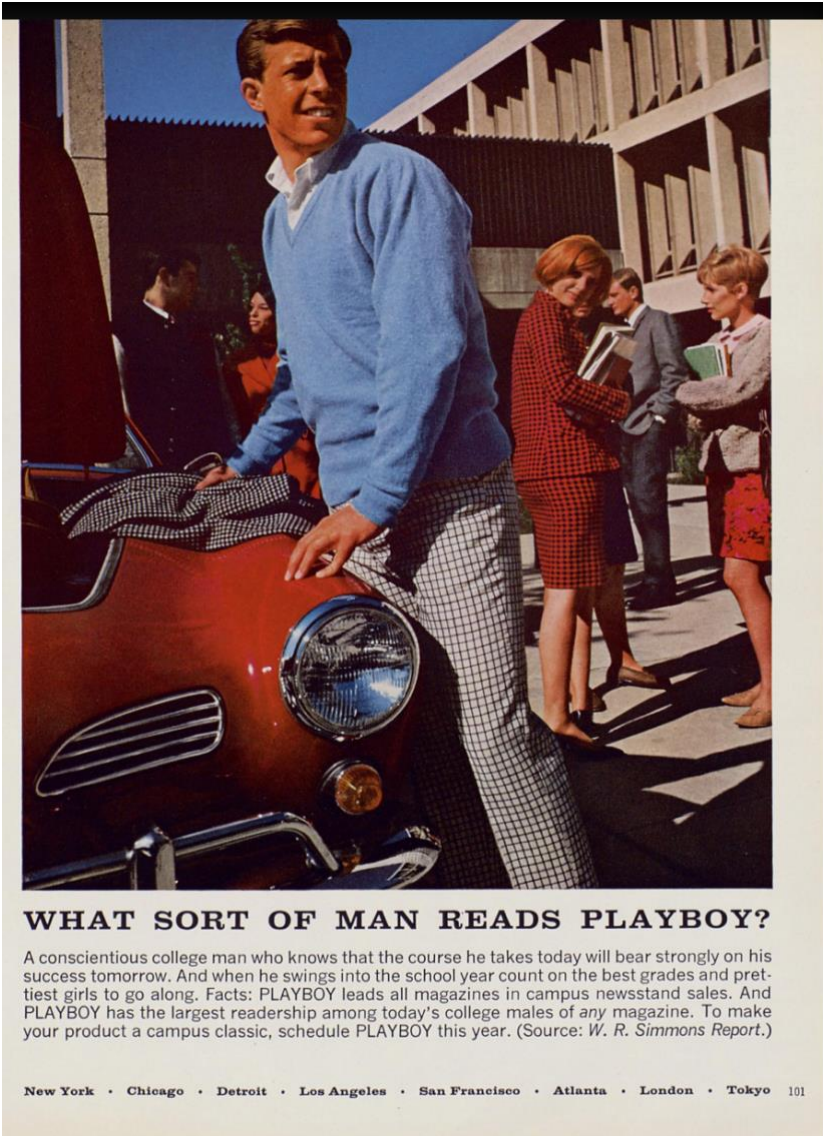


Figure 28: Playboy, *What Sort of Man Reads Playboy?*, 1967, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, September 1967, 101.

Through the analysis of *Playboy's* articles and advertisements surrounding fashion and entertainment, it is evident that Hefner attempted to, and in many ways, succeeded at educating and dressing its male readers in the image of the ideal bachelor. Hugh Hefner attempted to provide men with a magazine that helped shape them into proper and successful bachelors. As he writes: "For *Playboy's* editor, a good men's magazine should include both fine fiction and

pictures of beautiful girls with 'plunging necklines or no necklines at all' . . . because most normal men will enjoy both, and both fit into the concept of a sophisticated urban men's magazine."¹⁰⁹ Hence, Hefner and his magazine *Playboy* curated a magazine for a male audience that was willing to partake in the sexual revolution, as *Playboy* allowed men to appreciate the naked female body, while also reading articles about fashion and entertainment. The magazine encouraged men to focus on money and their job before marriage while simultaneously allowing them to partake in sophisticated sex visually:

His [Hugh Hefner] magazine and the Playboy Clubs urged the open embrace of wholesome sex rather than conveying images of strippers, illicit liaisons, and shameful vices. 'The guy brings the dream with him – he supplies the most important ingredient of all,' Hefner told a British journalist. 'And the majority of guys are not looking for the kind of action that breaks up that dream. . . Clean sex has a greater appeal than tawdry sex.'¹¹⁰

Hefner successfully curated and attracted youthful successful men who were now willing to postpone marriage in a means of enjoying their economic freedoms. His success was calculated in a Fifties survey that identified who the buyers of *Playboy* were. While the survey was conducted shortly after it was published it can be assumed that his audience only grew with the success of the magazine. The study discovered that most of the purchasers were indeed successful men:

A 1955 survey of *Playboy* readers uncovered statistical evidence supporting its appeal to the youthful, ambitious, and affluent. Conducted by the market research company of Gould, Gleiss, and Ben, Inc., it reported that the great majority of readers were between the ages of twenty and thirty four, over 70 percent had attended college, almost 63 percent were business and professional men or students studying the enter those fields, 88 percent owned automobiles and nearly all took regular vacations. . .¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Hugh Hefner, "The Playboy Philosophy: On our ninth anniversary Playboy's editor-publisher spells out - for friends and critics alike- our guiding principles and editorial credo." *Playboy*, December 1962, 73-200, 169.

¹¹⁰ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 173.

¹¹¹ *Ibid*, 77.

Overall, it becomes clear that Hefner played an essential role in curating what it meant to be a single bachelor in America by helping to create a new single American man that both accepted and rejected traditional American ways of living by rejecting notions of marriage and sexual purity until later in life:

The 'Playboy Philosophy' was integrally mixed with the upwardly mobile lifestyle of affluent America. You experimented with sex, and then settled down into the life for which you had been prepared – spouse, children, and career. The 'sexual revolution,' then, for these Americans, was a rite of passage, a part of 'growing up,' to be discarded when puritanical normality was necessary for career and life advancement.¹¹²

Thus, Hefner uniquely transformed the ideologies surrounding marriage and sex by interpreting what it meant to be a bachelor and live a bachelor lifestyle. While also underhandedly supporting the traditional nuclear family lifestyle – as long as it was embraced after men had an opportunity to explore being a bachelor. Not only did Hefner carefully navigate his philosophy around traditional family expectations but he did the same with religion as most of the sexual restrictions stemmed from religion.

Hefner did not reject religion but instead wanted his audience and staff to recognize the old worn-out ways of thinking:

Sexuality provided a telling example. Irrationally insisting that sexual activity be strictly limited to marriage, he contended, the church overlooked the obvious sexual desires and needs of unmarried people. By simply stating that 'sex for all these people is wrong, is taboo, in truth, religion has not satisfactorily come to grips with the problem as it exists' he wrote.¹¹³

¹¹² John R. Greene, *America in the Sixties*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010, 143.

¹¹³ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 181.

Hefner recognized the drive for sexual freedom and successfully pushed American society to see the flaws of its morals and standpoints. He explicitly did so by not only curating what it meant to be a bachelor, but he did so by curating what the new single American woman looked and acted like.

Chapter 4: The New Single American Woman Through Hefner's Vision of Empowering Women

While Hugh Hefner instructed men how to become the ideal male bachelor that he created in his magazine, he also reinvented the ideal single woman. After all, his creation of the bachelor was only complete when a young single woman was willing to take part in newly found sexual freedoms. Illustrating women with new sexual prowess generated social controversy because it showcased women in a light that was polar opposite to the image of the domestic woman that was so often depicted in traditional American family television shows and popular culture.¹¹⁴ To avoid backlash Hefner had to prove that his magazine and ideologies surrounding women were for their betterment. For example, when Hugh Hefner was asked about women and how they fit into his philosophy in a 1966 *Cosmopolitan* interview he responded: "I don't think of women as playthings."¹¹⁵ Thus reiterating that he saw women as independent individuals who deserved to be freed from socially constructed constraints. Hefner's message suggested that despite the fact that his magazine was devoted to showcasing nude women for the male reader, he was only doing so with the women's consent and desire. Arguably, Hefner was convincing as his success normalized photos of naked women between lifestyle articles for men.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ *Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004, 4., Watts, Steven. *Mr Hugh Hefner and the American Dream PLAYBOY*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2008, 230-231.

¹¹⁵ Irwin Theodore, "Cosmopolitan Interviews Hugh M. Hefner, Playboy's Controversial Editor," *Cosmopolitan*, May, 1966, 76-80, <https://subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/login?URL=?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/cosmopolitan-interviews-hugh-m-hefner-playboys/docview/1824577611/se-2?accountid=11233>, 79.

¹¹⁶ Jeffrey Escoffier, ed. *Sexual Revolution*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003, xiii.

While Hefner created an all-men's entertainment magazine that featured semi to fully nude women, he was careful to remind his audience that his intentions for these women were to keep them realistic, marriable, single and confident figures in American society who wanted to be liberated from sexual constraints.¹¹⁷ In order to do so, he curated and used Playmates as the symbol of "the liberated young woman who stood outside marriage and motherhood as a student, stewardess, model, secretary or librarian."¹¹⁸ Hence, Playmates became symbols of the sexual revolution as they all appeared to happily embrace their newly freed sexuality and were eager to become a centerfold in *Playboy*. While simultaneously promoting the notion that women were looking for sex and sexual experiences before deciding to get married. In addition, it is significant to note that Hefner believed in the importance of showcasing these women as natural beauties: "Hefner maintained that a healthy society encouraged robust female sexuality. *Playboy's* ideal of 'full figured, fresh faced. . . natural beauty' protected against the identity confusions of an 'asexual society.'"¹¹⁹ Promoting these women as natural beauties reinforced the idea that Hefner didn't see women as playthings to dress up and alter in order to fit the image of *Playboy*. Instead, he conveyed to his readers that these were all American women who simply wanted to embrace their sexuality.

Women who were featured in the magazine as Playmates [women who were featured in the centerfold of the magazine]¹²⁰ had an accompanying biography that outlined their likes, interests and bodily composition. It is interesting to note that the vast majority of the written

¹¹⁷ Steven Watts, *Mr Hugh Hefner and the American Dream PLAYBOY*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2008, 231.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid, 46.

biographies reflect American traditional morals, ideologies and family life that was prevalent in American society after the Second World War. For example, 1963 September Playmate Victoria Valentino's (figure 29) biography reads:

There exists in this world a small but notable number of girls to whom artistic endeavors come naturally. Such a gifted one is our September Playmate, a dark-tressed Los Angeleno named Victoria Valentino, whose talents, like her figure, are wondrously well-rounded . . . she paints . . . she sings . . . she dances . . . she plays the guitar . . . And she acts . . . I [Victoria Valentino] studied a year at New York's American theater wing, where I majored in musical theater, before moving to L.A. . . . On what she wants from life: 'Love'.¹²¹

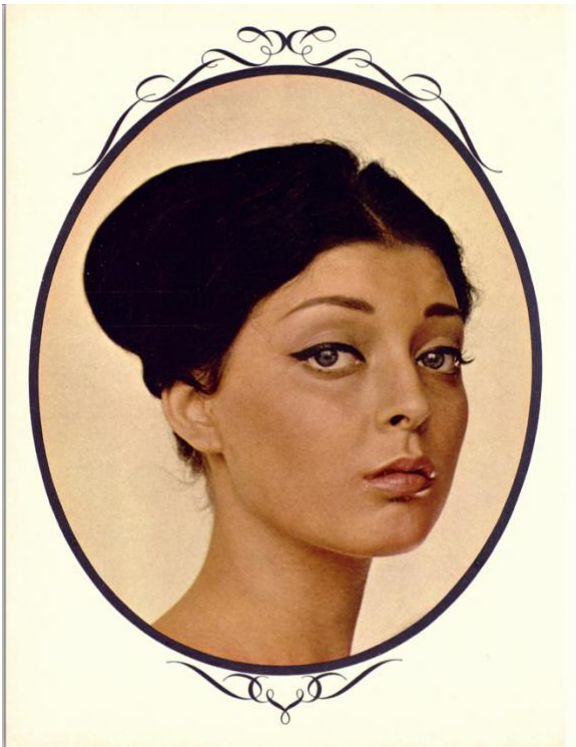


Figure 29: Playboy, *Miss September: Playboy's Playmate of the Month*, 1963, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, September 1963, 118.

Here Victoria is not only admired for her "well-rounded figure" and beauty, but she is also admired for her musical and theater talent that is rather rare to come by – according to

¹²¹ "Viva Victoria." Playmate of the Month. *Playboy*, September 1963., 118-21, 118.

Playboy. By including this biography, it makes Victoria more approachable and allows her to be seen as a regular woman that one might cross paths with while they are in Los Angeles.

Furthermore, her biography indicates that she wanted to find love, reiterating that regardless of the fact that she is posing for a centerfold, that she still desires to be in a loving relationship which could lead to marriage. Hence, reinforcing the idea that at the end of the day Valentino wanted what every other respectable woman in America was supposed to want – a stable relationship/marriage to presumably start a family.

The October 1964 Playmate of the month Rosemarie Hillcrest (figure 30), from Great Britain, included in her biography that she dreamed of becoming a *Playboy* Playmate and Bunny and subsequently made it happen when she visited America.¹²² While Rosemarie desired to work as both a Playmate and a Bunny in America, it is significant to note that she is featured in the magazine not only for her good looks but because she has ancestry in England that dates back to royalty, she is getting a degree in economics, is a swordswoman and an equestrian.¹²³ This is significant because Hefner reinforces that the Playmates were more than just beautiful objects to be admired. As Hefner is cognisant to highlight her achievements and interests to show that the beautiful Playmates were also intelligent, interesting and have acquired hobbies outside of their passion to pose in *Playboy*. To drive this point further, Hefner not only writes about it but he takes photographs of Rosemarie at school, with her horses and reading before he includes any nude photographs of her. This arguably makes Rosemarie more realistic to the male reader

¹²² "Hail Brittania." Playmate of the Month. *Playboy*, October 1964., 108-11, 108.

¹²³ Ibid, 109.

as the reader can visualize her in her everyday life. Making Rosemarie more approachable while simultaneously showing that average “normal” women are sexy and want to be sexy.



Figure 30: Playboy, *Miss October: Playboy's Playmate of the Month*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, October 1964, 109.

This is seen again in the July 1964 issue where Melba (Figure 31) is featured as Playmate of the month. Like Rosemarie, Melba is photographed working her job and enjoying free time. What is significant about Melba is that she is a part time manager at a meat shop where she is not only qualified but actively cuts meat for a living while maintaining a part time fashion model

job.¹²⁴ Here Hugh Hefner was careful to specify that the women featured in his magazine were not only educated, but could hold positions of authority within their workplaces, which was fairly uncommon for women as they were typically in positions of subservience or caregiving.¹²⁵ Again, like Rosemarie, Melba is featured in the magazine in her workplace where she appears happy and content. She is also photographed in the woods, where she is playing around and having a good time. This makes Melba appear both approachable and loving, while at the same time makes the reader believe that he can run into a Playmate worthy female anywhere.

¹²⁴ "A Toast to Melba." Playmate of the Month. *Playboy*, July 1964., 72-75, 72.

¹²⁵ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2013, 20.

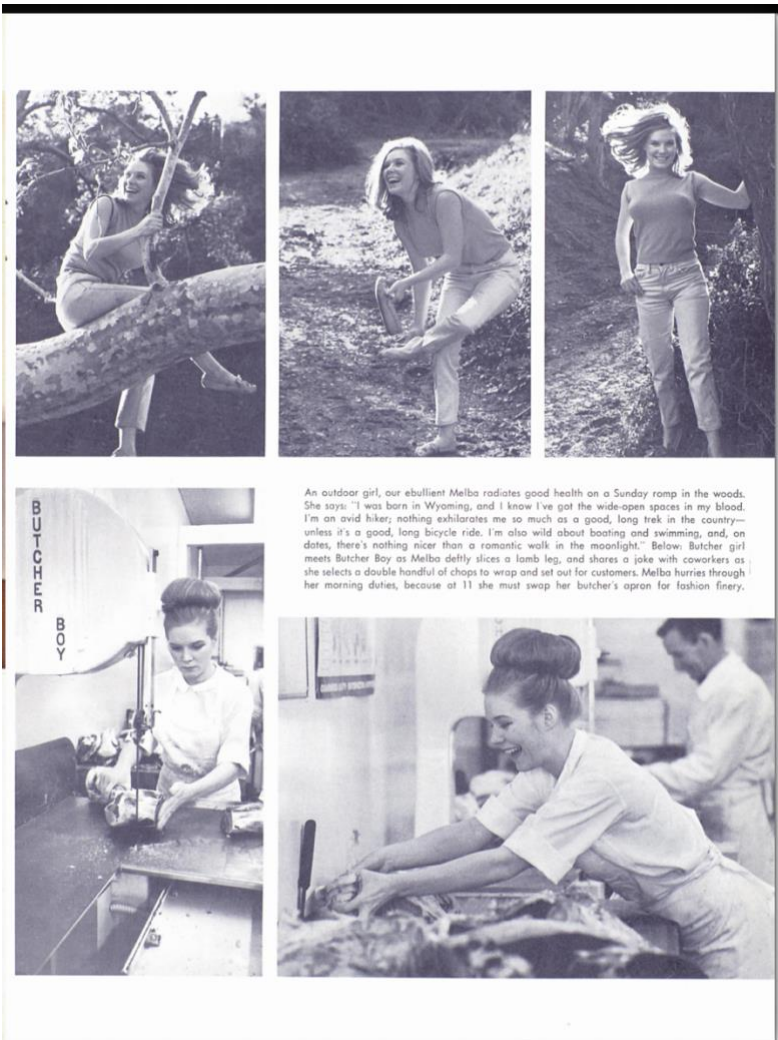


Figure 31: Playboy, *Miss July: Playboy's Playmate of the Month*, 1964, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, July 1964, 73.

Another symbol of American tradition shared within the Playmate of the month was a motherly one. This can be specifically analyzed in the 1966 Playmate Tish Howard (figure 32). Even though Tish has a degree in art and boasts about her Jaguar and lavish shopping sprees in her biography she is featured with a young girl, which at first glance appears to be her daughter.¹²⁶ Significantly, Tish's nude centerfold photo is right beside the images of her with the

¹²⁶ "Patrician Playmate." Playmate of the Month. *Playboy*, July 1966., 80-85, 80-85.

little girl. Symbolically this would represent that Tish can be both a woman of the sexual revolution and a woman of American tradition. The sexually liberated and driven Tish is featured on the left in figure 32 as she is posed nude in a locker room looking at the camera over her shoulder. While the traditional American woman side of Tish is featured on the right in figure 32 as she is dressed appropriately [wearing a high collared dress that sits below the knees and white gloves] while she fulfills motherly duties while shopping with and consoling the young girl. This has the potential to represent the idea that while Tish is young and should be allowed to express herself sexually and embrace her sexual freedoms, she will be ready to fulfill the duties of a mother and housewife as she gets older. Showing that the progressiveness of the magazine did not eliminate all American traditional norms/ideas.



Figure 32: Playboy, *Miss July: Playboy's Playmate of the Month*, 1966, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, July 1966, 84-85.

Much like Tish being featured in a motherly role, August 1968 Playmate – Gale Olson directly stated in her biography her aspiration to have a family after she fulfills her need for adventure. Gale states in her biography, her desire to become an astronaut.¹²⁷ In addition, her biography includes information about her father who fought in World War II, Korea and Vietnam¹²⁸ which shows that Gale comes from a family that embodies American patriotism and courage as her father participated in all the wars America was in. It also emphasises that beyond Gale's role in *Playboy* that she is a daughter of a presumably respectable family and that she has career goals that breach specific gendered roles because becoming an astronaut meant that Gale needed to excel in math and would presumably devote a significant amount of time in school and training that would take away from getting married and starting a family at a younger age.

What is significant about the patterns throughout the Playmates of the Sixties is Hefner's ability to show a balance between feminist thought about the importance of education and careers while also balancing Freudian theory surrounding traditional American values by illustrating that these women would eventually want to find love, intimacy, get married and have a family. While some Playmates only really desired to become Playmates or Bunnies a lot of them showed a desire to get an education and career, which is mentioned throughout *The Feminine Mystique* by Betty Friedan.¹²⁹ Demonstrating that they were resembling a desire to embrace changing ideologies in America by putting their career aspirations and education before marriage. In addition, some of the women featured held jobs that were not stereotypically

¹²⁷ "Star-Spangled and Starry-Eyed." Playmate of the Month. *Playboy*, August 1968., 84-89, 84-85.

¹²⁸ Ibid, 84.

¹²⁹ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2013, 15, 433, 436-437.

women's jobs.¹³⁰ Because Hefner published and seemingly embraced these women striving to work outside of traditional roles, he arguably showed that his magazine supported these women in their abilities to assume positions of power, authority and intelligence. Finally, there is a balance by endorsing traditional American family values, as some of the women in the centerfolds were featured with children or voiced their desires to have a family and find love, which is reminiscent of Freudian Theory/American traditions and expectations of femininity.¹³¹ Even though these women were posing semi to fully nude, they still embraced and aspired to live traditional American lifestyles as wives and mothers after they pursued their goals in *Playboy*, education and careers. This was explored by historian Steven Watts:

Playboy presented itself as a strident opponent of the 1950's domestic ideal. It called for a loosening of the model of middle-class conformity binding young women (as well as young men) and applauded the notion that they should postpone marriage, work for a time, and explore the world before settling into motherhood and family. The magazine also contented that females should be freed from 'Puritanism' and allowed to experience erotic pleasure just like their male counterparts. *Playboy's* playmate of the Month typified this message.¹³²

Not only were these women iconic symbols and centerfolds in *Playboy* magazine, but the women featured as Playmates also appeared approachable and realistic. By including photographs of Playmates in their regular activities, *Playboy* reinforced the message to its readers that they would be able to cross paths with a Playmate worthy woman anywhere. In addition, the women were made to appear respectable while nude.

¹³⁰ Robert O. Self, *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012, 104.

¹³¹ Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2013, 21 & 262.

¹³² Steven Watts, *Mr Hugh Hefner and the American Dream PLAYBOY*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2008, 231.

One of the *Playboy* Playmates, Victoria Valentino, wrote for the Washington Post: "I recognize the artistry with which Playboy treated the centerfold in its early years. In those days, the women were photographed as genuine pinups, wholesome and lovely – not anatomical gynecological studies."¹³³ The women are alluding to their nakedness, but they are not fully exposed. They are also smiling and appear to be happy and having a good time. It becomes clear that Hefner's magazine went beyond the confines of porn by attempting to embrace and endorse traditional American life while also embracing new sexual freedoms and re-inventing a single woman who wanted both marriage and a healthy sex/single life.

To further create a space for the new American bachelor and the new single American woman, Hefner also established clubs where bachelors could mingle with *Playboy* Bunnies. *Playboy* Bunnies were all supposed to attract and connect with the bachelors that Hefner welcomed as both his readers and club guests. To the average observer, it appeared as though all of his women were eager to meet these bachelors and entertain them in exchange for a positive sexual relationship that was both mutual and respectable. It can be assumed that Hefner believed that he created a space that welcomed healthy sexuality and encouraged the liberation of female sexuality. As one of his editors responded to questions about Hefner's philosophy:

Hefner does not advocate adultery. . . nor does he advocate irresponsible promiscuity. When he speaks of sexual freedom he is not talking about 'free love', or sexual behaviour freed of its inherent responsibilities. He simply wants to see sex freed from undemocratic legal restrictions and from fear, guilt and shame that have perverted and repressed it for hundreds of years.¹³⁴

¹³³ Valentino, Victoria. "I was a Playboy centerfold. My experience shows why ending nudity in the magazine is a good thing." *The Washington Post*, October 16, 2015.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/posteverything/wp/2015/10/16/i-was-a-playboy-centerfold-my-experience-shows-why-ending-nudity-in-the-magazine-is-a-good-thing/>.

¹³⁴ A C. Spector, and Hugh Hefner. "The Playboy Forum: an interchange of ideas between reader and editor on subjects raised by "the playboy philosophy"." *Playboy*, August 1964., 35-138, 37.

Hence, Hefner and his team were careful not to cross boundaries within the sex industry and be accused of lewd sex or prostitution. Hefner wanted his Bunnies to be sexy, yet respectable as he was careful not to cross the line between a sex worker and a liberated woman. To ensure this, Bunnies were given a manual upon being hired. The manual examined is from Bunny Regina from 1968. The manual outlined rules and etiquette that the Bunnies were to abide by; such as, being asked not to indulge in deep conversations with customers and not to physical touch customers or allow themselves to be touched. This can be analyzed from page 16 of the “Bunny Manual”:

Mingling by any female employee with any patron or guest is not allowed and shall be cause for immediate dismissal. Bunnies may, however, converse briefly with patrons, provided that conversation is limited to a polite, exchange of pleasantries and information about the Playboy Club. A Bunny may never, under any circumstances, divulged personal information about herself or other Bunnies such as what they do outside the club, last names, phone numbers, addresses, etc. At all Clubs except New York Club . . . Bunnies may:

- 1) Have their pictures taken with patrons, provided there is no physical contact whatsoever
- 2) Dance with patrons at the feature dance party, provided there is no close physical contact, (twist, watusi, bugaloo, etc., are examples of acceptable dances). . .¹³⁵

What is significant about this rule is that Bunnies were not allowed to share any personal information with customers which would inhibit them from mingling outside of the club. In addition, they were not allowed to hold any long conversations with customers if it strayed away from conversation about the club or the drink/food menu; thus creating a clear divide and inhibiting any personal connection from being made. It is interesting that neither the customer nor the Bunnies were allowed to touch one another. This is significant as it places the Bunnies at a distance from the bachelor attending the club. The Bunnies became an icon to watch,

¹³⁵ "The Playboy Club: Bunny Manuel." U.S Archives. <https://ia600503.us.archive.org/9/items/1969-bunnymanual/1969-bunnymanual.pdf>, 16.

appreciate and look at rather than an object they could touch and potentially abuse. The incentive to maintain and abide by this rule was the Bunnies job, as a Bunny could lose her job or receive demerit points that could attribute to her termination. This expectation also extended outside of the physical club as the manual explicitly states: "Although we [Playboy] do not in any way try to control your behaviour away from the Club, you must always conduct yourself in a manner that can only bring credit to your job and the other Bunnies with whom you work."¹³⁶ This statement is hypocritical, as it states the obvious that the club cannot control what their employees do outside of the workplace, however the suggestive language in the manual suggests that if their actions were to damper their reputation within the club or other Bunnies at the club that there might be repercussions, as inside the club, Bunnies were held to high standards of behaviour.

Overall, it is understood that women were fighting to be sexually liberated, obtain reproductive autonomy, acceptance into the workplace and the right to pursue a full education before marriage during the sexual revolution. These desires seem to be supported or endorsed through the analysis of the different Playmates and their biographies alongside the rules that the Bunnies were supposed to abide by if they worked in the clubs. Hefner showcased women in his centerfold that were intelligent, beautiful, hardworking, and desiring more than just marriage and children. He carefully, educated his male readers that these beautiful women were attainable, realistic, approachable and could be found in their own cities and towns. The only thing these women wanted [according to *Playboy*] was the option to express themselves sexually

¹³⁶ "The Playboy Club: Bunny Manual." U.S Archives. <https://ia600503.us.archive.org/9/items/1969-bunnymanual/1969-bunnymanual.pdf>, 20.

and embrace their youth before they found love and/or got married and started a family. Hence, he re-invented the ideal single woman in the Sixties. This single woman in the 1960s wanted to embrace her beauty/sexuality, work, have opportunities to explore their passions and hobbies and possibly seek higher education all while maintaining the illusion that these women were scouted in butcher shops, acting classes, school, at the mall and/or pursued *Playboy* to be featured. The creation of the new single male and woman can be analyzed in the cartoons featured in *Playboy* magazine.

Chapter 5: Solidifying the Image Through the Use of Cartoons

Hugh Hefner's reinvention of the single American woman and man was not only featured in *Playboy* through the use of Playmate centerfolds and written articles, but they were also illustrated in the cartoons made for *Playboy*. Like the *New Yorker* magazine, cartoons played an essential role in *Playboy*. They introduced levity into the pages of the magazine and helped illustrate and satirize the changing sexual ideologies in America. When *Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons* was published in 2004 Hefner reflects on the importance of the cartoons

The humorists in *Playboy* were hip subversives, sly revolutionaries who poked fun at the prevailing hypocrisies at the time. . . . When Alfred Kinsey dared to suggest, in statistical detail no less, that women were as sexually active as men, society attempted to kill the messenger, while *Playboy* embraced the reality, poking fun at the hypocrisy of our puritan pretensions. *Playboy* fueled the sexual revolution of the sixties, and our cartoonists supplied the spark.¹³⁷

The cartoons not only satirized the old ideologies and norms in American society, but they also continually reinforced the image of the new single American woman and man who enjoyed partaking in the changing sexual ideologies of the Sixties. Thus, Hugh Hefner was successful in maintaining a fluid message throughout his entire magazine. For example, in figure 33 the cartoon features an older couple walking into their front foyer. The couple are both conservatively dressed and appear to be wealthy as the man is wearing a full suit and top hat and the woman is wearing a decorative hat, gloves and formal attire, all of which are symbolic of wealth. In the background one can see a woman's hand hanging off the couch and a bra on the ground, suggesting that their daughter is having or just had sex in the living room while her parents were gone. This cartoon implies that the girl is young because she still lives at home; yet

¹³⁷ *Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons*. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004, 4.

old enough to be driven by her sexual needs/desires. The caption on the cartoon reads, "I guess the young folks decided to go out after all" which emphasizes a generational gap between the older and the younger generations. As the older generation is assumed to be conservative based on their attire and the home decor, the younger generation/daughter prefers to stay in and have sex. What is most significant about this cartoon is it instills the message that while the daughter is promiscuous, she still comes from a good home and family. This emphasizes that women from all social classes during the Sixties were partaking in sex and the sexual revolution. Just as the Playmates had interests, good families, an education and aspirations outside of their willingness to pose nude.



"I guess the young folks decided to go out after all."
Figure 33: Playboy Enterprises Inc, *I guess the young folks decided to go out after all*, 2004, Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons, 4.

A Mercedes Benz cartoon (figure 34) embodies much of the same message. The assumed mother is watching her daughter climb into a nice vehicle to go on a date. Again a generational gap is emphasized. While the daughter who is going on the date has her hair and makeup done and is wearing a tight and revealing dress. The mother is conservatively dressed and wearing an apron, the mother's attire suggests that she represents the American housewife ideal from the Fifties culture and the daughter represents the newer social culture of promiscuity, confidence and new fashion sense that often defied conservatism.¹³⁸ In addition, the male in this cartoon embodies the ideal bachelor, as he is clearly handsome enough to attract a beautiful girl, successful enough to own a Mercedes-Benz and puts care into his attire as he is formally dressed, and his hair appears to be well maintained. The man embodies the ideal *Playboy* bachelor. The caption of the cartoon reads: "Don't worry Mrs Higgins – I'll have your daughter in bed before midnight" which implies two potential options. The first being that the man will follow rules of tradition by getting the daughter home before her curfew. Or the second option implies that the couple on the date will be interacting sexually without being married or engaged. Thus, the second assumption embraces the sexual revolution and changing sexual ideologies. It is also significant that this advertisement also represents people of wealth or higher-class in American society, who are, stereotypically, are meant to represent class, culture and dignity. The fact that both cartoons (figure 33 and figure 34) are embracing the sexual revolution by having sex before marriage suggests that the sexual revolution was shared by all Americans.

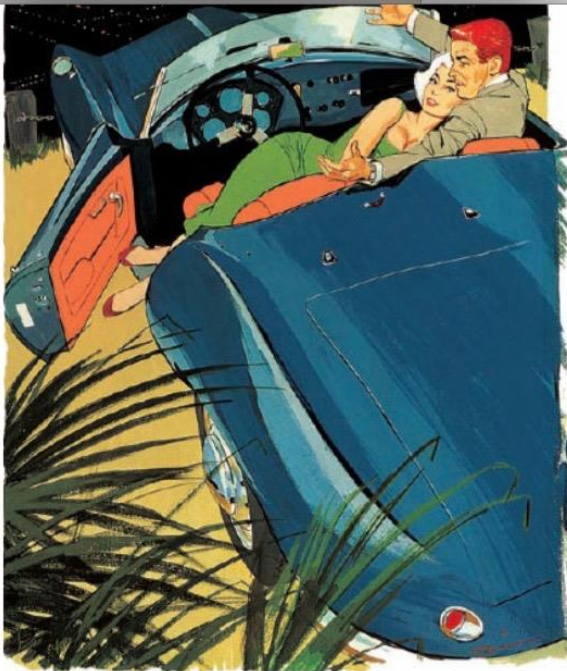
¹³⁸ John R. Greene, *America in the Sixties*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010, 147.



"Don't worry, Mrs. Higgins—I'll have your daughter in bed before midnight."

MERCEDES-BENZ 300SL

Figure 34: Playboy Enterprises Inc, *Don't worry, Mrs. Higgins – I'll have your daughter in bed before midnight*, 2004, Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons, 16.



"I'm tired of sneaking around like this. Just what does your husband have against me anyway?!"

Figure 35: Playboy Enterprises Inc, *I'm tired of sneaking around like this. Just what does your husband have against me anyway?!*, 2004, Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons, 16.

The cartoon “I’m tired of sneaking around like this. Just what does your husband have against me anyways” (figure 35) is also significant, as unlike the other cartoons it glorifies adultery. This can be assumed through the caption and details in the illustration. The cartoon suggests that the featured woman followed the societal expectation of getting married at a young age, which is implied through her, now, white hair which is symbolic of her older age. Yet despite her age or marital status she too embraces the sexual revolution by having an affair. The woman liberates herself by taking control of her sexual happiness. Moreover, the cartoon suggests that her husband should not hold a grudge against her male lover for having sex with his wife, which implies that being sexually satisfied trumps staying faithful. It is also significant to note that the wife is the one having an affair, as traditionally males were the ones who were not able to control their sexual urges.

Playboy cartoons not only displayed a generation gap, but they also featured older generations beginning to accept the sexual revolution and the ideas surrounding nudity and sex before marriage. This can be particularly examined in figure 36, where two older women are attending an art exhibit in presumably an artist’s home or studio. All of the paintings on display are nude women and the audience attending appear to be older white middle class women and men that are often depicted as the older generation of the Sixties (as seen in the previous cartoons) and yet none of them appear to be disgusted or appalled by the artist’s work. The caption reads “And I supposed this is where he rests between inspirations” which can be assumed to be part of the conversation between the two older women looking at the paintings hanging above [what looks like] a couch. This statement implies that the artist has sex with all of

his models, rests on the couch and then completes the painting before repeating the cycle again. Regardless, of the artists nude artwork all of the guests [both men and women] appear to be interested in the artist's work and are not turned off by the obscenity of the art as the guests in the background are smiling.

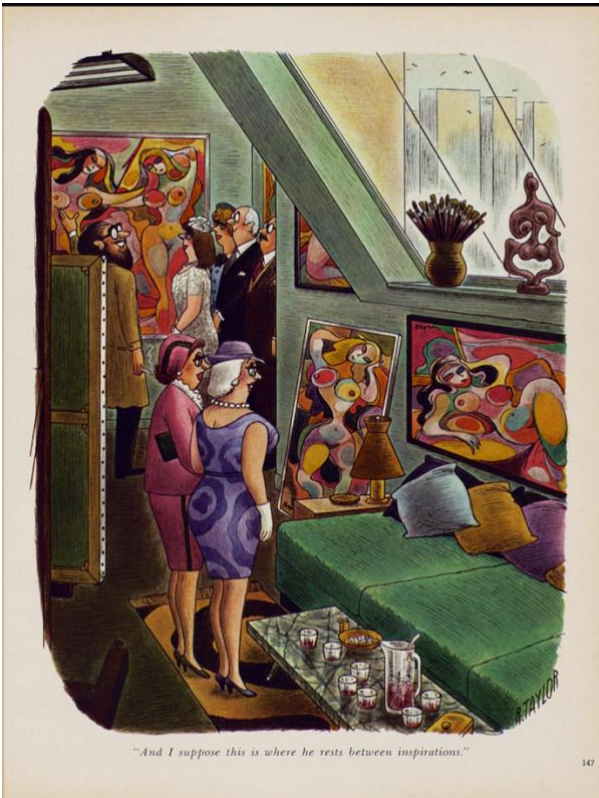


Figure 36: Playboy, *"And I supposed this is where he rests between inspirations"*, 1970, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, May 1970, 147.

Overall, it is clear that the sexual revolution in the Sixties did represent a period in which people changed their ways of understanding strict sexual guidelines. *Playboy* only aided this change by expressing "a growing, coherent, yearning for a new sexual code."¹³⁹ Which *Playboy* maintained through the messages in the cartoons. Hefner helped continue to share the messages around

¹³⁹ Steven Watts, *Mr. Hugh Hefner and the American Dream PLAYBOY*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2008, 107.

the need to change sexual moral codes in order to become more accepting of courting, dating and sex before marriage.

However, not all cartoons liberated women in a positive way or endorsed consensual sex before marriage. Some cartoons displayed sexual violence towards women and in some cases women's bodies were used without obvious consent. These illustrations reinforced male dominance, authority and the suppression of women. For example, a cartoon printed in the May 1963 *Playboy* Magazine (Figure 37) features women that have just been presumably violated in an act of sexual assault. In the background, it appears that the women are at a movie theater as there is a movie poster, movie sign and a fold out sign that reads "PLEASE DO NOT REVEAL THE ENDING." The fold-out sign suggests that at the end of the movie a woman is sexually violated/abused, and these actions are being mimicked by the male audience on their female counterparts. This can be assumed because the two women exiting the theater appear to be victims of sexual assault because neither woman is smiling. Both look as though they are in distress. Both are wearing shirts and bras that have been "torn" open as there appears to be rips in their clothing. Their hair is disheveled, and they both appear to be dirty, as if they were fighting back because their pants/skirts have dirty markings on them. Taken literally, this cartoon endorses the sexual assault of women for the pleasure of men. The assault is excused because they are mimicking a movie ending. This cartoon shares a message that was unsupported by feminist groups and non-feminist women alike who believed that pornography would support and encourage sexual violence and dominance against women.¹⁴⁰ More importantly, this goes

¹⁴⁰ Dany Lacombe, *Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism*. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994, 20, 27 & 30. & Carmine Sarracino, and Kevin M. Scott. *The Porning of America: The Rise of Porn Culture, What it Means, and Where We Go from Here*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008, 173.

against the *Playboy* philosophy in which Hugh Hefner tried to persuade his audience that his magazine was for the betterment of women's sexual liberation.¹⁴¹

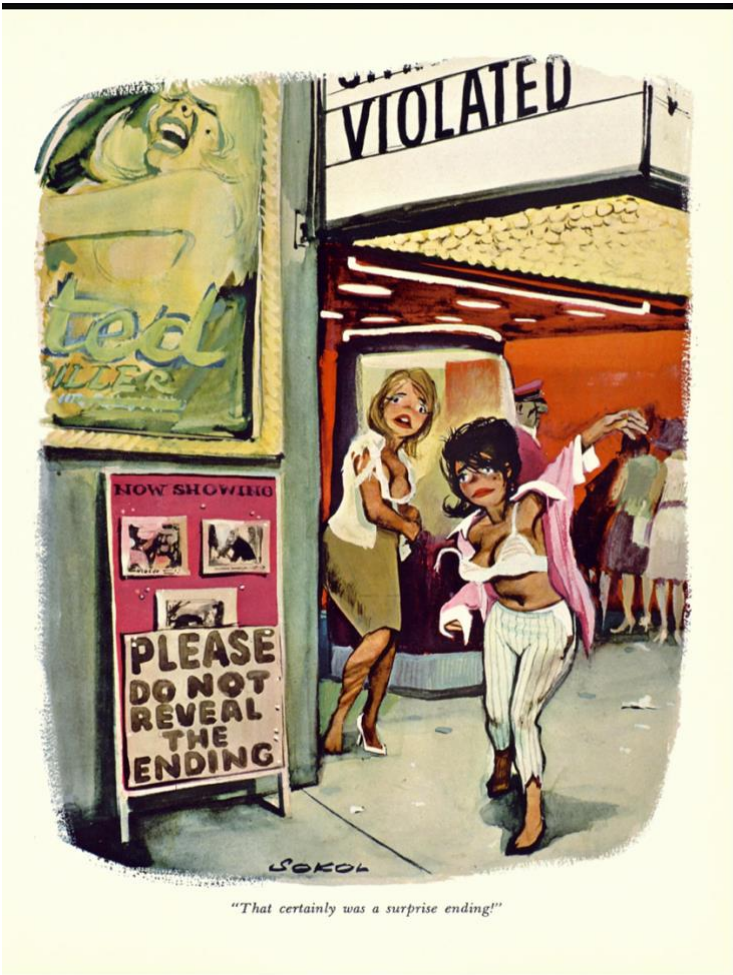


Figure 37: Playboy, "That was certainly was a surprise ending!", 1963, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, May 1963, 102.

Similarly, in a 1963 cartoon shown in figure 38, a woman who is going through customs at an airport is being violated by a customs officer. While it is typical for customs to check baggage, it is rather uncommon for a customs officer to grab a woman's top to look down it. The cartoon features a woman who has bags in both hands watching in shock (large eyes and mouth

¹⁴¹ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 235.

agape) while an officer pulls at the top of her dress and continues to peer down it. While no reason is given as to why this is a necessary act, it can only be assumed that the officer wanted to see the woman's breasts and used his position of authority to take advantage of the woman. This cartoon reinforces that men in authoritative positions can use their dominance to do as they please to women without obvious consequences.



Figure 38: Playboy, 1963, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, April 1963, 155.

In July 1967, another cartoon (figure 39) was published that showcased the objectification of women's bodies to sell products. The cartoon features a nude woman sitting like a dog in front of a can of open dog food that is covering her vagina. To reinforce the message of submission, the woman is wearing a collar that is attached to a leash. While the woman looks content sitting there, the rest of the cartoon implies that she is being used for the pleasure of the male gaze, as the four business men off to the side are all smiling and gazing happily at the posed woman. The caption reads "Chuck baby, this ad is going to sell us one helluva lot of dog

food” reinforcing that the success of the ad campaign comes at the expense of using a woman’s nude body to sell dog food, which is ironic, because women’s nudity has nothing to do with dog food. While this cartoon does showcase the increasing trends to use women and women’s sexuality in advertising,¹⁴² it places her in a submissive stance and position because she is squatting down, wearing a collar waiting to be led or instructed on what to do next.



Figure 39: Playboy, “Chuck, baby, this ad is going to sell us one helluva lot of dog food”, 1967, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, July 1967, 63.

¹⁴² Betty Friedan, *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: W.W Norton & Company, Inc., 2013, 267.

Another way women were dismissed through the cartoons was making them appear needy and desperate for men, specifically men that met the *Playboy* image of bachelorhood. In figure 40, from 1970, the man featured embodies the ideal *Playboy* bachelor as his home is nicely decorated and there is symbolism of wealth (his unit shelf contains luxury items often featured in *Playboy* magazine like a record player and an abundance of alcohol, and abstract art displayed on the wall which is a symbol of affluence). While the man answers his telephone a woman who is half undressed clings to the man with all her strength. This can be assumed since her cheeks are red, and she is using her teeth to hold up her body weight. Her strenuous effort suggests that she was presumably having a good time because she is attempting to maintain the bachelor's attention. It is also important to note that the woman visited this man's place with the purpose of selling goods to him. This is implied because the woman's suitcase features a cosmetic brand on the front and is left opened on the ground with the contents (which appear to be beauty products) spilled out across the floor. Hence, it can be safely assumed that the woman was going door to door, attempting to sell makeup products when she was easily swooned by the bachelor who answered his door. While she became completely infatuated with him, as she is presumably willing to have sex with someone she just met, the man treats her like an object that is not worthy of his time. As he proceeds to answer the phone and inform the caller that he "wasn't doing anything important". This cartoon objectifies the woman as a plaything because while he sees the hook-up as nothing important, she was clearly enjoying her time enough to

desperately cling to him despite his lack of interest. Again, this contradicts Hefner's statement where he shared that he did not see women as playthings.¹⁴³



Figure 40: Playboy, "Oh, that's all right, I wasn't doing anything important", 1970, Playboy Magazine: Hugh M. Hefner, November 1970, 137.

¹⁴³ Irwin Theodore, "Cosmopolitan Interviews Hugh M. Hefner, Playboy's Controversial Editor," *Cosmopolitan*, May, 1966, 76-80, <https://subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/login?URL=?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/cosmopolitan-interviews-hugh-m-hefner-playboys/docview/1824577611/se-2?accountid=11233>, 79.

Overall, *Playboy* wanted to create a visual and physical space to help continue changing ideologies surrounding sex for the bachelor and single woman. However, Hefner's efforts to maintain the idea that his magazine helped to embody female sexuality and desire becomes muddled throughout the Sixties and early Seventies as the cartoons seem to display both the empowerment and degradation of women. Yet in all cartoons, the male bachelor is always in a position of power, wealth and authority. Hefner's support of women's sexuality started becoming murkier through the late Sixties and early Seventies as it became clearer that Hefner was more interested in creating an environment and fantasy for men. In a 1972 *New York Times* article, *Playboy Enterprise* was questioned on their seemingly desire to create a *Playboy* environment for the male bachelor and their answer depicted a lavish lifestyle for men that was completely branded by *Playboy*:

A man gets up in his Playboy townhouse at Lake Geneva, calls a Playboy limousine to take him to the airport, where he gets into a Playboy chartered plane, flies to New York, takes a Playboy limousine to a Playboy hotel in midtown Manhattan, changes into his Playboy suit, takes a Playboy ferry to a Playboy convention center on Randall's Island for his business meeting, that night goes to a Playboy restaurant and then to a Playboy theater where he sees a Playboy movie. That's the Playboy Environment. And while we don't have all those things yet, we have many of them and we're exploring the rest.¹⁴⁴

Overall, this emphasizes that the *Playboy* image of bachelorhood and the sexual liberation of women breached much further than the magazine itself, but it was an attempt to create a sexy utopia for men under the expense of women's rights and liberation, as the Playmate and Bunny image was a façade to support men's sexuality.

¹⁴⁴ Anthony J. Lukas, "The 'Alternative Life-Style' of Playboys and Playmates." *New York Times*, June 11, 1972, 2.

Chapter 6: The Fantasy Collapse – An Analysis of Written and Oral Histories from Bunnies and Playmates

The Sixties were a turbulent time of change, and the introduction of *Playboy* magazine only amplified the changing perceptions of sex. Hugh Hefner created an entertainment magazine for men that depicted women/Playmates/Bunnies as approachable and sexually driven all while depicting them as women who desired marriage and children. Hugh Hefner extended this depiction into his clubs and guides to help create, not only a magazine, but a space and environment in which both youthful men and women were supposed to indulge in free and clean sex without repercussions. Hefner worked diligently to ensure that the women he featured in his magazines appeared to be happy, safe, content and liberated, while also depicting a balance of traditional ideologies and norms. Hence, *Playboy* shared both a progressive and conservative message. He was successful maintaining this balance as women wanted to work for *Playboy*.

While on the surface, the women of *Playboy* seemed to embody and embrace their new roles as sex symbols, the lived reality of these women was often drastically different. Over time, more evidence was procured to dismantle the *Playboy* façade and fantastical environment to prove that the women who worked for *Playboy* were specifically curated and coached on how to be the perfect bachelor fantasy. Interestingly, in 1972, *New York Times* reporter J. Anthony Lukas compares the *Playboy* fantasy to *Disney*. While *Disney* created a world for children and *Playboy* created a world for men and “women” they both manipulated their images to be perfect. Lukas writes:

Hefner has sanitized his Playmates. No warts, wrinkles or other blemishes – and no internal wrinkles, quirks or complexities – mar their ivory perfection. Just as Disney’s

animals . . . are always bouncy, cuddly, cute and innocent, so are Hefner's bunnies. . . so Hefner makes his women look and behave not like real women but the way adolescent men, in their fantasies, want women to be.¹⁴⁵

This is significant because while *Disney's* fantasy is easier to distinguish reality from fantasy because its cartoon nature, the *Playboy* fantasy was much harder to break down as it dealt with real women and men. And the women who worked for *Playboy* were required to follow strict meticulous rules in a means of continually maintaining the fantastical world of *Playboy* both inside and outside the workplace.

For instance, women working as Bunnies had to be incredibly conscientious and meticulous when it came to the way they dressed for work because any dress code infringements could result in the accumulation of demerit points or dismissal. These rules were published in their Bunny Manual:

The Bunnies' hair, nails, shoes, makeup and costume must be 'Bunny-Perfect' and no Bunny is permitted to begin working unless appearance specifications are met. Demerits may be issued for carelessness in this regard. When the Bunny reports to her scheduled room, the Room Director, too, will note her appearance and suggest improvement if necessary.¹⁴⁶

Not only were they responsible for ensuring that their image was perfect, they were expected to enhance their image by wearing false eyelashes, glamorous makeup, maintaining a manicure and they were expected to wear lotion on their body to ensure that their skin always looked soft and perfect.¹⁴⁷ These expectations were specific and detailed, thus showing how detailed the fantasy was. Not only did the women working need to take responsibility over their

¹⁴⁵ Anthony J. Lukas, "The 'Alternative Life-Style' of Playboys and Playmates." *New York Times*, June 11, 1972, 2.

¹⁴⁶ "The Playboy Club: Bunny Manual ." U.S Archives. <https://ia600503.us.archive.org/9/items/1969-bunnymanual/1969-bunnymanual.pdf>, 12.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 25-26.

own look and beauty enhancements but they were also continually judged by their employers and managers to ensure that they maintained this image. These policed guidelines show how hard *Playboy* worked to maintain an illusion, as every detail was thought about and crafted to ensure that it was a fluid and consistent image. These guidelines also merely reinforced the fantasy theory that reporter Lukas writes about in his article, as the women were made to look fictional as part of their look became more of a costume than reality. However, this fantasy also meant that women were often abused, mistreated or had their rights infringed upon.

Feminist and journalist Gloria Steinem worked undercover as a *Playboy* Bunny in the Sixties to expose the *Playboy* industry of mistreating its female workers. The Bunny costume that the women had to wear was described by Steinem:

It was so tight that the zipper caught my skin as she fastened the back. She told me to inhale as she zipped again, this time without mishap, and stood back to look at me critically. The bottom was cut up so high that it left my hip bones exposed as well as a good five inches of untanned derriere. The boning in the waist would have made Scarlett O'Hara blanch, and the entire construction tended to push all available flesh up to the bosom. . . began to stuff an entire plastic dry-cleaning bag into the top of my costume. . . The whole costume was darted and seamed until it was two inches smaller than any of my measurements everywhere except the bust. 'You got to have room in there to stuff,' she [wardrobe mistress] said. 'Just about everybody stuffs. And you keep your tips in there.'¹⁴⁸

From Steinem's first-hand experience, it is made clear that the costume was carefully constructed to manipulate and contort the female body. As the waist seems to have acted like a corset to make the waist appear smaller. Not only did their waist appear smaller but intentionally sewing the costume a size too small, forced a women's body and flesh to be squeezed and shaped into something it was not. Steinem also reports that some of the women's costumes

¹⁴⁸ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador, 2018, 43-45.

were so small that women began to lose feeling in their legs and were expected to continue wearing the costume despite the pain or lack of feeling.¹⁴⁹ Presumably this should be considered abuse because the Bunnies had no other option but to endure the pain from wearing too small of a costume or be dismissed. In addition, if their natural breasts were deemed too small the Bunnies were expected to stuff their cleavage to appear larger in size to presumably appeal more to the male gaze. Steinem's reports on the costume and makeup expose a level of façade that *Playboy* created in means of maintaining the image, of what Hefner considered to be beautiful for his male bachelors. As the costume clearly did not bring comfort for the women, nor did it support the natural and robust beauty that Hefner had previously claimed.¹⁵⁰

Not only did Bunnies have to look a certain way, but they were also coached on how to act. According to Steinem, part of her training consisted of being aware of the importance of looking cheerful throughout the entire shift,¹⁵¹ regardless of the way men treated them. Steinem reported that if a male customer touched her, she was to simply say "'Sir, you are not allowed to touch the Bunnies'"¹⁵² which is a polite statement to excuse the initial act of physically touching a woman without her consent. In addition, despite Hefner's claims and the Bunny handbook which restricted Bunnies from fraternizing with club members, a condition of their employment was to undergo a gynecological examination. This test infringed upon their right to privacy as a waitressing job should not require a sex test. The examination specifically tested each Bunny for

¹⁴⁹ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador, 2018, 63.

¹⁵⁰ Steven Watts, *Mr Hugh Hefner and the American Dream PLAYBOY*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons Inc., 2008, 231.

¹⁵¹ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador, 2018, 50.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 54.

sexually transmitted diseases or infections;¹⁵³ which would presumably be unwarranted if the Bunnies were restricted from engaging sexually with any of the club members or bachelors.

Furthermore, women were not only contorted into costumes that made them look “flawless” in a means of maintaining the *Playboy* Bunny standard of beauty, but the work required of the Bunnies was long and strenuous. Steinem reported that she lost over 10 pounds within the first couple of days working at the club.¹⁵⁴ This amount of weight loss suggests that Steinem was working in a physically demanding workspace without enough opportunities to eat or drink to maintain her weight.

While undercover, Steinem found that most women auditioning to be Bunnies, really wanted to work for *Playboy* as the world Hefner created and advertised appeared to be fantastic.¹⁵⁵ However, as Steinem found out, life working as a Bunny was strenuous and manipulative work and did not support the natural beauty of women, nor did it endorse the liberation of female sexuality because the Bunnies’ entire dress code and coached behaviour was for the pleasure of the bachelors attending these clubs. Steinem’s work helps to reinforce that the Bunnies working at the clubs were indeed an unrealistic depiction of women and *Playboy* worked diligently to maintain this image through unfair hiring and dismissal policies that prevented older women from continuing to work at the club.

In a 1973 *New York Times* article, four former *Playboy* Bunnies tried to expose *Playboy* for age and sex bias. The four girls were ‘dismissed’ for losing their Bunny look. For example, Patti Columbo states that she was dismissed by her Bunny mother because she had “changed from a

¹⁵³ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador, 2018, 51.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 76.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid*, 39.

girl into a woman” and had begun to show signs of aging.¹⁵⁶ In fact, women working as Bunnies in the *Playboy* clubs could be dismissed based on “Crinkling eyelids, sagging breasts, varicose veins, stretch marks, crepey necks, and drooping derrieres.”¹⁵⁷ Thus, only reinforcing that the women working within the clubs were not a realistic depiction of the average American woman, as often depicted and written about in *Playboy* magazine. In addition, the Bunnies were often also an illusion and façade created by *Playboy* in order to maintain the *Playboy* fantasy.

Women posing for *Playboy* had to presumably reject their childhood morals and beliefs that their parents instilled in them to become a Playmate/Bunny. While some parents accepted their daughter’s choices, others were appalled that their daughters would fall victim to a damaged reputation from being photographed for the pleasure of thousands of unknown men.¹⁵⁸ According to Gloria Steinem, being victim to the male gaze was a type of power dynamic that victimized the woman and empowered the viewers.¹⁵⁹ This power dynamic and façade can be examined through Playmate and Bunny Victoria Valentino.

For this thesis I was able to interview Victoria Valentino who was a Playmate centerfold in 1963. Her story and interview help provide more insight into the world *Playboy* and what it was like to work for *Playboy* from a female perspective. Her interview and story provide essential insight into the working world of *Playboy*.

Victoria Valentino was the September 1963 Playmate and for many she served as an emblem of the sexual revolution. She is remembered today for her centerfold as she is featured

¹⁵⁶ "4 Dismissed Playboy Bunnies Over 28 Charge Age and Sex Bias." *New York Times*, November 15, 1973.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Anthony J. Lukas, "The 'Alternative Life-Style' of Playboys and Playmates." *New York Times*, June 11, 1972, 2.

¹⁵⁹ Gloria Steinem, *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador & Henry Holt and Company, 1983, 231.

in the winter 2020 issue “Once a Playmate, Always a Playmate”.¹⁶⁰ Yet at the time of the photoshoot in the Sixties, she was completely unaware of how popular *Playboy* magazine was and how or what the photos would be used for. Valentino’s story is an example of how she was used, changed and abused to please the men around her.

Valentino grew up in a conservative home where she found her passion for the arts.¹⁶¹ However, when she was eighteen years old, she was kicked out of her family home and sent to California to live with her Grandma.¹⁶² While in California, Valentino met her first husband who was practicing and training to become a photographer.¹⁶³ Her husband and his photographer friend decided to photograph Valentino in the nude to send to *Playboy* magazine.¹⁶⁴ Valentino reports that at the time she was unaware of how popular the magazine was and thus was unaware of the repercussions it could have on her life if she was called for a *Playboy* shoot.¹⁶⁵ The only thing that Valentino was aware of was one thousand dollars you could be paid for doing a centerfold shoot. In which, she never saw that money because her husband controlled the funds.¹⁶⁶ When Valentino was successful in being called in for a centerfold shoot her image was changed to meet the wants of Hugh Hefner. On the day of her shoot, she showed up to the studio and the photographer told her that Hefner wanted her hair to be black so that her image would be that of classic Italian or Spanish even though Valentino has no Spanish or Italian

¹⁶⁰ Jamilah Lemiux, "Once a Playmate Always a Playmate." Cover Story. *Playboy*, 2020., 186-97.

¹⁶¹ Victoria Valentino, interview by Brooklyn Rae Barlow, August 7, 2021.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

heritage.¹⁶⁷ While there was no time to have her hair properly done before the shoot, her husband went to the closest drug store to purchase black hair spray to artificially color her hair black for her shoot.¹⁶⁸ While today the photo was selected as one of the top 100 centerfolds in 2000¹⁶⁹ it fails to represent who Valentino actually was and instead her image was cultivated to match the image that Hefner had for that day.

Valentino experienced more trauma on the day of her shoot. Not only was her image manipulated but she wasn't fully informed on the impact her centerfold would have on her family and the amount of publicity she would receive; but her husband was physically and psychologically abusive.¹⁷⁰ The day she showed up to be photographed for *Playboy* she had been beaten by her husband, evicted from her home and had recently discovered she was pregnant.¹⁷¹ However, her trauma continued, as while she was getting her shots done she looked into the parking lot where she witnessed her husband having sex with another woman in his vehicle.¹⁷² During the interview she recalled that in that moment she was done and defeated.¹⁷³ Yet looking at her centerfold and reading her biography there is nothing there to indicate Valentino was a survivor of abuse. Valentino escaped from her abusive husband with her son in 1964.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁷ Victoria Valentino, interview by Brooklyn Rae Barlow, August 7, 2021.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ "5 Playboy Playmates Who Found Their Purpose Taking A Stand For Equality." *ForbesWomen* . *Forbes*, December 29, 2019. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/meimeifox/2020/12/29/5-playboy-playmates-who-found-their-purpose-taking-a-stand-for-equality/?sh=6f43e4e334b9>.

¹⁷⁰ Victoria Valentino, interview by Brooklyn Rae Barlow, August 7, 2021.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

Despite escaping from her husband and removing herself from an abusive relationship she reports that the centerfold had completely changed her life.¹⁷⁵ While Valentino's passion was within theater, art and music she found that after being a Playmate the drama and theater circles were not accepting of her unless she was willing to take off her top, sit there and look pretty or show no intelligence whatsoever.¹⁷⁶ In an interview with *Washington Post* Valentino states:

Becoming a Playmate changed the trajectory of my life. Theatrical agents and casting directors didn't see me as a serious actress after my Playboy debut. Instead, my agent told me to 'just stand there and look pretty. Don't say anything intelligent and spoil it.' I fumed. I had to remind men to lift their eyes from my bosom when we were introduced, dryly saying, 'I'm up here.' I would dress down so they wouldn't look at me lasciviously. It was disheartening to say the least.¹⁷⁷

Despite having her passion derailed, in 1974 in an attempt to support herself and her son she signed up to work as a *Playboy* Bunny at the club on Sunset Blvd that had just opened up.¹⁷⁸ She worked there for six months and said it was the most difficult job she had worked.¹⁷⁹

Valentino's experience was much like Steinem's as Valentino stated:

You had to have somebody suit you up because it [bunny costume] was so tight . . . it's like false fingernails and false eyelashes and wigs and rubber pads to put in the sides of the bust so that you would just sit on top because they wanted you to give the illusion of being bigger than you were. So, then we have to learn how to mix all your drinks, and in high heels, and serve backwards at the tables, so that you didn't fall out forward. And that was difficult, you couldn't sit down, you could only perch, you had to hold your tray at all times and if your bunny tail was dirty or if you got a run in your stocking or if your shoes were scuffed up or any little infraction, or if your bunny cufflinks were not facing

¹⁷⁵ Victoria Valentino, interview by Brooklyn Rae Barlow, August 7, 2021.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Victoria Valentino, "I was a Playboy centerfold. My experience shows why ending nudity in the magazine is a good thing."

¹⁷⁸ Victoria Valentino, interview by Brooklyn Rae Barlow, August 7, 2021.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

each other kissing, then you would get demerits so if you got up to I think 30 demerits you would get fired.¹⁸⁰

Again, Valentino reminisces about the fantastical illusion of the *Playboy* Bunny and how unrealistic and fake it really was. She exposes how tight the costumes were, as she recalls that they were so tight that one couldn't fully bend to sit in a chair or bend over without fear that one's breasts would fall out (because their breasts were sitting on top of the cups instead of fitting securely inside). This was why the Bunnies had to learn how to mix and pour drinks backwards. In addition, the rules surrounding the look of the costume were so meticulously judged and critiqued it emphasizes how much of a perfect illusion *Playboy* was trying to pull off. Valentino compares the experience to being trafficked because she felt that she had no other option but to work at the club and her past traumatic experiences left her feeling unheard and abused.¹⁸¹

While she does remember that some women were thrilled to work at the club because they did not have any past traumatic experiences and they were using the job as a way to make money to save for their kids, school, house and/or a way to meet a potentially wealthy husband, Valentino was working the job to survive¹⁸² and after losing her son and suffering from assault she removed herself from the Los Angeles scene. Valentino then lived in Louisiana for three years where she gave birth to her daughter and then later moved back to Los Angeles to live with her cousin.¹⁸³ According to Valentino, her cousin gave her the best gift because she helped

¹⁸⁰ Victoria Valentino, interview by Brooklyn Rae Barlow, August 7, 2021.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid.

¹⁸³ Ibid.

Valentino sign up for college.¹⁸⁴ After thriving in school, Valentino left Los Angeles again to live in Portland and she immediately registered for community college to continue studying and learning.¹⁸⁵ It was not until 1994 that Valentino moved back to Los Angeles and at that point she had been working as a nurse in a managerial position, living with a doctor and had given birth to a second daughter. At this point Valentino knew who she was and being fifty years old she noticed that she had a fan base of people who wanted her autograph and she was invited to the fortieth anniversary party of all the lost Playmates. At this point Valentino reminisces about how much more confident she felt because she had found herself and knew who she was outside of *Playboy* and didn't feel trapped to be something she wasn't anymore.

Before the interview concluded Valentino was asked about Hefner's intentions and his success in liberating women during the sexual revolution, Valentino responded by stating:

But in his [Hugh Hefner] own mind, he [Hugh Hefner] was liberating them [women]. But really what he did, he liberated them, for the private reserves of all of his cronies [friends and companions]. We'd be invited up to the parties after the party, after we get off of an eight-hour shift, and it was, you know, with all orgies. And you know, you were, it was, you're sort of expected to, to participate. And I went to one not knowing what I was getting into, I never went to another one.¹⁸⁶

Hence, Valentino's experience of going to an after party reinforces a couple of arguments. One Hefner continued to pursue the dominance of the single male bachelor by creating a fantasy world of *Playboy* where the men were continually pleased by the females who partook in the world. In the instance of the after party, it is assumed that Valentino was not the only one who felt pressured into participating in sexual acts without consent or certainty that

¹⁸⁴ Victoria Valentino, interview by Brooklyn Rae Barlow, August 7, 2021.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

this is what they wanted. In addition, while attending these parties the women remained in their bunny costumes – reiterating that the message of free love and liberating female sexuality was only acceptable under the vision that Hefner had created. When Steinem reported and questioned the gynecological exam during her hiring process, it now makes sense that Hefner wanted his employees tested to ensure that if his friends at the after parties were to partake in any type of sexual intercourse that they would be having “clean” sex as Hefner previously stated: “the majority of guys are not looking for the kind of action that breaks up that dream. . . Clean sex has a greater appeal than tawdry sex.”¹⁸⁷ While this original statement was for the purpose of looking at sexualized images, it now becomes clear that the statement also meant physical sex as he was hosting after parties that included orgies. It also means that his dream of clean sex went beyond just looking but he wanted the men who partook to feel as though they were physically living that dream and not just looking at it.

Today, Valentino focuses on making positive change for women and young girls. She also remains connected with *Playboy* and she believes that *Playboy* has the potential to make positive change for women. As she stated in a *Washington Post* interview

Hugh Hefner launched *Playboy* during the repressed 1950s with the dream of liberating women’s sexuality and publishing cutting-edge articles that intellectually explored sociopolitical issues. In the 1970s, the magazine began to show more explicit images, and gradually deteriorated into sexploitation and objectification. In the last few years, perhaps due to the public preference, the magazine has attempted to redeem itself by returning to more modest images, but iconic publisher Hefner has surprised us once again with his vision for a new *Playboy*.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ Steven Watts, *Mr. Playboy: Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008, 173.

¹⁸⁸ Victoria Valentino, "I was a *Playboy* centerfold. My experience shows why ending nudity in the magazine is a good thing."

In addition, Valentino wrote and preaches that the new *Playboy* will help women and men again socially. *Playboy* has been a successful corporation since the 1960s and the *Playboy* bunny logo has become a symbol that is recognized around the world. Valentino believes that “By eliminating nudity, *Playboy* can transform the Playmate into something that uplifts the woman, dignifies her, and puts her on a pedestal that makes her more self-empowered. The centerfold doesn’t need to be nude to be iconic. Instead, she can be glamorous, elegant, intellectual – a multifaceted, well integrated, self-actualized woman.”¹⁸⁹

While *Playboy* arguably has the potential to correct its image in the twenty first century it was successful in creating a fantastical world in the Sixties and Seventies for the pleasure of the male bachelor. Through firsthand experiences it becomes clear that the image of the Playmate and Bunny was manipulated, contorted and falsified in order to fit into an image that Hefner envisioned for his *Playboy* brand. Regardless of the fact that women were drawn to the *Playboy* scene to become a part of a world that seemingly supported the liberation of female sexuality, many were unaware of the reality of what working for *Playboy* would actually be. As these women were expected to abide by the rules, smile and look pretty while Hefner continued to write and paint a picture of his world to his male audience.

¹⁸⁹ Victoria Valentino, "I was a Playboy centerfold. My experience shows why ending nudity in the magazine is a good thing."

Chapter 7: A Conclusion

The Sixties was a time of changing thought, ideologies and practices surrounding marriage, sex and sexuality that opposed traditional ways of being and living in American society. Alfred Kinsey and his associates, Betty Freidan, and Helen Gurley Brown all wrote about and statistically demonstrated growing trends and desires for women to be liberated from traditional restraints surrounding their sexuality and reproduction. During the 1960s and 1970s women fought for the right to express themselves more freely and to have accessible access to contraceptives in a means of obtaining autonomy over their own bodies. In doing so, men and women could postpone marriage in order to pursue educational and career goals before they decided to settle down and fulfill traditional American roles as husband and wife. These changing ideologies and thoughts also assisted in the legalization and emergence of pornography. Pornography at the start of the sexual revolution was initially accepted because it was the first-time women, men and LGBTQ communities could express themselves sexually in a space that was meant to be safe. However, as the Sixties progressed a clear distinction had to be made between pornography and erotica. While erotica – according to Steinem – was sexuality that empowered both men and women, pornography used power dynamics to typically victimize women in a means of empowering men.

Being cognisant of these changes Hugh Hefner published his first *Playboy* magazine which also happened to feature images of semi to fully nude women. Hugh Hefner articulated to his audience(s) that his magazine was curated to support the changing ideologies of American lifestyle as he felt it was a right to express oneself sexually without being constrained to outdated ideas surrounding sex.

The success of *Playboy* magazine was owed to Hefner's ability to construct a fantastical world. In order to do so, Hefner first reconstructed who the ideal single American man was. He used his magazine as a guide to instruct men on how to become the ideal male bachelor. As Hefner instructed men on how to dress, behave, cook, prepare drinks and in some instances spend their money. Statistically Hefner successfully encouraged men to spend their money to uphold the image of the *Playboy* bachelor. Hefner also reconstructed the ideal single American woman through the Playmate centerfolds and the Bunnies within his clubs. These women embodied beauty and sex and they were showcased both nude and in suggestive clothing. Yet, Hefner was careful to still articulate in his magazine that his Playmates and Bunnies were confident, sexy, intelligent, successful, had hobbies and interests that went beyond their traditional domesticated roles. Hefner also ensured that his featured women were realistic to the male reader as they were featured in everyday life activities. Once he had established the new ideal American man and woman Hefner continually reinforced this fantastical image through all aspects of his magazine which included the cartoons that satirized ways of thinking about sex and sexuality.

However, not all aspects of his magazine were insightfully articulated to support the liberation of female sexuality. Over time the illusion started to "slip through the cracks" as more evidence and close reading display a desire to enhance male dominance and authority and the repression of the female body. Through an analysis of Gloria Steinem's undercover work as a Bunny and an interview with Playmate and Bunny Victoria Valentino it becomes glaringly obvious that the fantastical world that Hefner created through his magazine and clubs was in fact an illusion to support the domination of his male readers and bachelors. As Playmate photos and

biographies were manipulated to support the image Hefner wanted to maintain. And the Bunnies in *Playboy* clubs were contorted into costumes and expected to abide by strict rules that continually enhanced the image of the perfect single female despite the pain the women endured and the number of false enhancements they had to use.

While the sexual revolution spurred a change in personal and ideological ways of thinking about sex and reproductive autonomy, popular culture – specifically *Playboy* magazine – manipulated and used this time to continually reinforce male dominance and authority over women who were trying to become sexually liberated from their confining domesticated roles and sexual restraints. Yet, regardless of the exposure of these illusions in the media, *Playboy* remained an international sensation.

Bibliography

"A Toast to Melba." Playmate of the Month . *Playboy*, July 1964., 72-75.

Anderson, Terry H., *The Movement and the Sixties: Protest in American From Greensboro to Wounded Knee*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Constance, Backhouse, and David H. Flaherty, eds. *Challenging Times: The Women's Movement in Canada and the United States*. Canada: McGill-Queens University Press, 1992.

Benshoff, Harry M., and Sean Griffin. *America on Film: Representing Race, Class, Gender, and Sexuality at the Movies*. United Kingdom: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

Brown, Helen G., *Sex and the Single Girl*. 50th ed., New York: Barricade Books Inc., 1962.

Cady, Kathryn A., "Labor and Women's Liberation: Popular Readings of The Feminine Mystique." *Women's Studies in Communication* 32, no. 3 (2009): 348-79.

Cohen, Nancy L., *Delirium: The Politics of Sex in America*. Berkeley: Counterpoint, 2012.

Cottrell, Robert C., *Sex, Drugs, and Rock 'n' Roll: The Rise of America's 1960 Counterculture*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015.

Cullen, Jim, *The American Dream: A Short History of an Idea that Shaped a Nation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Duke, Selwyn. "Kinsey: Deviancy Is the New Normal." *The New American: History Past and Perspective* 25, no. 9 (April 27, 2009).

Ederstadt, Mary. *Adam and Eve after the Pill: Paradoxes of the Sexual Revolution*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012.

Escoffier, Jeffrey. ed. *Sexual Revolution*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2003.

"Figure MS-1a Men's marital status." census.gov.
<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/visualizations/time-series/demo/families-and-households/ms-1a.pdf>.

Fox-Genovese, Elizabeth. Commentary . *Commentary* 100, no. 5 (November 1995): 53-54.

Frank, Thomas. *The Conquest of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism*. United States: The University of Chicago Press, 1997.

Gourley, Catherine. *Gadgets and Women Warriors: Perceptions of Women in the 1950s and 1960s*. Vol. 4. Minneapolis: Twenty-First Century Books, 2008.

Green, Robert. "Back to Campus: Our Annual Autumnal Survey of Classic Revivals and New Directions for the Academic Year." *Playboy*, September 1967., 138-44.

Green, Robert I., "Playboy's Fall and Winter Fashion Forecast: The Definite Statement on Coming Trends in Men's Wear and Accessories." *Playboy*, October 1962., 85-190.

Green, Robert. "Vacation in Style: The Tops in Men's Resortwear engagingly counterpointed by the topless in women's." *Playboy*, November 1964. , 85-173.

Greene, John R., *America in the Sixties*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2010.

"Hail Britannia." Playmate of the Month . *Playboy*, October 1964., 108-11.

Haralovich, Mary B.,. "Sitcoms and Suburbs: Positioning of the 1950's Homemakers." *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 11, no. 1 (June 5, 2009): 61-83.

Hefner, Hugh. "The Playboy Philosophy: On our ninth anniversary Playboy's editor-publisher spells out - for friends and critics alike- our guiding principles and editorial credo." *Playboy*, December 1962., 73-200.

Hegarty, Marilyn E., *Victory Girls, Khaki-Wackies and Patriotutes: The Regulation of Female Sexuality During World War II*. United States: New York University Press, 2008, 87.

Ketchum, Alton. "The Search For Uncle Sam." *History Today* 40, no. 4 (April 1, 1990): 20-26.

Lacombe, Dany. *Blue Politics: Pornography and the Law in the Age of Feminism*. Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1994.

Lemiux, Jamilah. "Once a Playmate Always a Playmate." Cover Story. *Playboy*, 2020., 186-97.

Lukas, Anthony J., "The 'Alternative Life-Style' of Playboys and Playmates." *New York Times*, June 11, 1972, 2.

Marcus, Daniel. *Happy Days and Wonder Years: The Fifties and the Sixties in Contemporary Cultural Politics*. United States Of America: Rutgers University Press, 2004.

Mario, Thomas. "Far-Flung Fling." *Playboy*, December 1967., 141-45.

"Martial Status of the Population of the United States: 1960." Supplementary Reports . *1960 Census of Population*, September 11, 1961.

Olson, Beth and William Douglas. "The Family on Television: Evaluation of Gender Roles in Situation Comedy." *Sex Roles* 36, no. 5/6 (1997): 409-27.

"Patrician Playmate." Playmate of the Month . *Playboy*, July 1966., 80-85.

Playboy: 50 Years: The Cartoons. San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2004.

Press, Andrea. "Gender and Family in Television's Golden Age and Beyond." *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 625, no. 1 (September 2009): 139-50.

Reumann, Miriam G., *American Sexual Character: Sex, Gender, and National Identity in the Kinsey Reports*. London, England: University of California Press, 2005.

Sarracino, Carmine, and Kevin M. Scott. *The Porning of America: The Rise of Porn Culture, What it Means, and Where We Go from Here*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2008.

Schwarz, Frederic D., "The Kinsey Report." *American Heritage* 48, no. 8 (December 1997): 98.

Self, Robert O., *All in the Family: The Realignment of American Democracy Since the 1960s*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2012.

"Southern Comfort Barmate: Home Bartenders Guide to Expert Drink Making." *Playboy*, December 1964., 59-70.

"Star-Spangled and Starry-Eyed." Playmate of the Month . *Playboy*, August 1968. , 84-89.

Steinem, Gloria. *Gloria Steinem: Outrageous Acts and Everyday Rebellions*. New York: Picador & Henry Holt and Company, 1983.

Theodore, Irwin. "Cosmopolitan Interviews Hugh M. Hefner, Playboy's Controversial Editor," *Cosmopolitan*, May, 1966, 76-80,
<https://subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/login?URL=?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/cosmopolitan-interviews-hugh-m-hefner-playboys/docview/1824577611/se-2?accountid=11233>.

"The Playboy Club: Bunny Manual ." U.S Archives. <https://ia600503.us.archive.org/9/items/1969-bunnymanual/1969-bunnymanual.pdf>.

Turner, Christopher. *Adventures in the Orgasmatron: How the Sexual Revolution Came to America*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

Vaudagna, Maurizio. "Family and Nation in America." *Journal of American History and Politics* 3 (March 2, 2020): 1-10.

Verbrugge, Martha H., *Active Bodies: A History of Women's Physical Education in Twentieth-Century America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Valentino, Victoria. interview by Brooklyn Rae Barlow, August 7, 2021.

"Viva Victoria." Playmate of the Month . *Playboy*, September 1963., 118-21.

Watts, Steven. *Mr. Playboy Hugh Hefner and the American Dream*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008.

Women's Interests, "And made two non-Playmate Appearances in Playboy Layouts, because she says, 'I get a plug for my pictures and that kind of publicity if very valuable. . .,'" *Cosmopolitan*, March, 1968, 112-115,
<https://subzero.lib.uoguelph.ca/login?URL=?url=https://www.proquest.com/magazines/made-two-non-playmate-appearances-playboy-layouts/docview/1824573677/se-2?accountid=11233>.

"4 Dismissed Playboy Bunnies Over 28 Charge Age and Sex Bias." *New York Times*, November 15, 1973.

"5 Playboy Playmates Who Found Their Purpose Taking A Stand For Equality."

ForbesWomen. *Forbes*, December 29, 2019.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/meimeifox/2020/12/29/5-playboy-playmates-who-found-their-purpose-taking-a-stand-for-equality/?sh=6f43e4e334b9>.